An active analysis of Basque ergativity[1]

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1. INTRODUCTION

Possibly the universally most widely known fact about Basque, one which perhaps every linguist is acquainted with, is that Basque is an ergative language. It has an ergative case-marking system which displays no splits of any kind, whether conditioned by the tense / aspect of the verb or by the semantics of the argument nouns. It has a verbal agreement system which is almost entirely ergative – absolutive arguments are coindexed by verbal prefixes and ergative arguments are coindexed by verbal suffixes[2]. The only accusative feature in the grammar is, in fact, the syntax.

As has been shown by many researchers, such as Ortiz de Urbina (1989) and Hualde (1988), Basque syntax is almost entirely accusative. In a transitive clause, the ergative argument is just as much a subject as in an accusative language, according to various kind of diagnostic tests[3]. For linguists working in generative paradigms, such as the Government and Binding Theory (Chomsky 1981 and related work), it is a difficult question how to reconcile

[2] The exception being in the past tense with 3rd person ABS and non-3rd person ERG. In such a case ABS agreement is not realized at all, and ERG agreement is prefixed. That this phenomenon, termed *ergative displacement*, is not a tense-conditioned split in ergativity in the traditional sense has, however, been argued by Laka (1993b: 54ff).

these two contradictory features, the ergative morphology and the accusative syntax, and to decide which of the two cases, ergative (henceforth ERG) and absolutive (henceforth ABS) is the structural equivalent of the case referred to as 'nominative' (henceforth NOM) in an accusative language.

Some researchers, such as Levin (1983), Laka (1993a) and Bobaljik (1993) have tended to associate ERG with NOM, in deference to the syntax. Others, such as Bittner & Hale (1996), have tried to associate absolutive ABS with NOM, in deference to the overt case system. One avenue which no-one, to my knowledge, seems to have explored, is that there is no structural equivalent to NOM whatsoever in Basque, and that this is the most characteristic feature of Basque grammar.

This is the claim I make in this paper. As a prelude to showing evidence supporting this claim, I must first demonstrate, in the spirit of Levin (1983) and Ortiz de Urbina (1989), that Basque is not an ergative language in the same prototypical sense as Eskimo-Aleut languages, but rather an active language, or what Dixon (1994) refers to as a Split-S language[4]. This is the topic of section 2. In section 3 I show that neither ERG nor ABS correspond in any relevant way to NOM. Instead I propose that Basque ERG should be identified with a cross-linguistically comparable ERG, the Case of the Agent, whereas ABS should be identified with accusative (henceforth ACC). In section 4 I address the apparent problems caused by the subject-orientation of control structures, and suggest that control is more suitably derived from the Extended Projection Principle (EPP) than from Case requirements. Finally, in section 5, I address the problems the present analysis poses for traditional mainstream Government and Binding Grammar (cf especially Burzio 1986), and show, by drawing parallels with Austronesian "subject-focus[5]" languages (such as those spoken in the Philippines and Taiwan), that there is nothing theoretically problematic about the situation in Basque. Section 5 further illustrates the consequences of this analysis for language typology.

2. BASQUE IS NOT ERGATIVE

This statement is controversial, and is largely dependent on how we choose to define ergativity. One definition of an ergative language might be a language in which ergative case can occur, and according to such a definition, Basque is necessarily ergative[6]. The classical definition of an ergative language is, however, a language where the subject of a transitive verb displays a case never displayed by either the subject of an intransitive verb or the

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[3] For reasons of space, I shall not review this evidence here. Readers are referred to the aforementioned works.

[4] The first to draw attention to this fact was Levin (1983). It is now widely accepted by scholars of Basque (Ortiz de Urbina (1989), Gomez & Sainz (1995) etc), although to my knowledge Levin is the only linguist who has fully taken the consequences of this view in a Government and Binding analysis of the language.

[5] A more detailed explanation of this term appears in section 5. Briefly, subject-focus languages are such where an accusative pattern coexists with an ergative pattern, the distribution being determined by what is best described as voice.

[6] Such a description must, of course, be based on the assumption that we can identify a case as being ERG.

object of a transitive verb. According to this definition, Basque can not be said to be ergative.

The basic idea underlying the concept of ergativity based on transitivity is that ABS is the default case which must be assigned (even if the position to which it is assigned is not syntactically speaking a subject) whereas ERG is a case which can only be assigned with transitive verbs, i.e. where ABS is also assigned. This criterion is termed the Obligatory Case Parameter by Bobaljik (1993). The problem with this view is that ABS in Basque is not, in fact, obligatorily assigned. This is evident in two contexts.

2.1. Object omission

The first point concerns the use of transitive verbs without their objects. In Basque, if a transitive verb is used without its object, the subject retains its ERG case-marking, and the auxiliary retains its ergative (or double) agreement. This is regardless of whether there is a possible interpretation of a referential object (as in 1b) or not (as in 1c). An Agent of a verb such as *edan* 'to drink' may not appear in ABS (1d) unless accompanied by one of a set of auxiliaries, such as *ari* 'PROGRESSIVE' (1e). Otherwise, a transitive verb with an ABS subject is interpreted either as a reflexive (1f) or as an impersonal "passive"[7] (1g).

1   a.   Peru-k   ardoa   edan   du.
          PN-ERG   wine-ABS   drink   AUX.3sA-3sE
          'Peru has drunk wine'.

      b.   Peru-k   edan   du.
          PN-ERG   drink   AUX.3sA-3sE
          'Peru has drunk'. /
          'Peru has drunk it'.

      c.   Peru-k   taberna-n   eda-ten   du.
          PN-ERG   tavern-LOC   drink-IPF   AUX.3sA-3sE
          'Peru drinks in the tavern'.

      d.   *Peru   eda-ten   da.
          PN-ABS   drink-IPF   AUX.3sA

      e.   Peru   ardoa   eda-ten   ari   da.
          PN-ABS   wine-ABS   drink-IPF   PROG   AUX.3sA
          'Peru is drinking wine'.

      f.   Reagan   ikusi da.
          PN   see   AUX.3sA
          'Reagan has seen himself'. / 'Reagan has been seen'. (Hualde 1988)

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[7] It is doubtful whether the term 'passive' is suitable here. Although the usage of the Basque impersonal construction is often akin to that of an English passive, the syntactic processes are quite different. My choice of the term 'passive' in this context is purely impressionistic.

g. Ardobeltza   eda-ten   da   hemen.
    wine black-ABS drink-IPF AUX.3sA   here
    'Red wine is drunk here. / Here one drinks red wine'.

This can be contrasted with the situation in Eskimo-Aleut languages[8], where ERG may only be assigned an Agent if the Patient is realized, either overtly or by *pro*. Thus the only possible reading of a verb with an ERG Agent but without an overtly realized Patient is that the Patient is implied and referential (2a). If there is no referential patient implied, the Agent appears in ABS case (2b). In fact, even if the Patient is overt but not referential, it is either incorporated (2c) or expressed as an oblique with an antipassive morpheme on the verb (2d)[9]. Both of these strategies require that the Agent be in ABS case.

2 a. John-am   ner-aa.
       PN-ERG   eat-3s/3s
       'John ate *(it)'. (Yup'ik; Bobaljik 1993, p 74)

   b. John   ner-uq.
       PN-ABS   eat-3s
       'John ate (*it)'. (Yup'ik; Bobaljik 1993, p 74)

   c. Piita   tuktu-siuq-puq.
       PN-ABS   caribou-look.for-3s
       'Piita is looking for a caribou'.
       (Central Arctic Eskimo; Manning 1996, p 153)

   d. Hansi   inun-nik   tuqut-si-vuq.
       PN-ABS   people-MOD   kill-ANTIP-3s
       'Hansi killed people'. (West Greenlandic; Manning 1996, p 82)

Thus, in Eskimo-Aleut, ABS is always assigned to a referential argument. It is truly the 'Obligatory Case' in the terminology of Bobaljik 1993. Moreover, the examples show that ABS is only assigned once per clause: if ABS is prevented from being assigned to the patient, by making use of detransitivization (2b), incorporation (2c) or antipassivization (2d), ABS is automatically assigned to the Agent.

In this respect Eskimo-Aleut is truly ergative. The case-marking system is directly dependent on the *de facto* transitivity of the clause, rather than on the prototypical argument structure of the verb involved.

How can we account for the different behaviour of Basque and Eskimo-Aleut? Traditionally, both Basque and Eskimo-Aleut are considered to be

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[8] For reasons of space, I shall henceforth use the term *Eskimo-Aleut* (in the singular) to refer to the entire family. The features referred to are typical of the language family as a whole.

[9] Manning (1996) cites several examples which show that antipassivization is an option even with a referential patient. The important point to note, however, is that a change in the case of the Patient always coincides with a a change in the case of the Agent - either the Patient or the Agent (but only one of them) must have ABS case.

morphologically ergative, as opposed to syntactically ergative languages like Dyirbal in Australia (cf Dixon 1994). However, recent research (Bittner & Hale 1996, Manning 1996) has suggested that Eskimo-Aleut is syntactically ergative. This would explain the Eskimo-Aleut facts in a straightforward manner (since it would imply that ABS in Eskimo-Aleut has exactly the same status as NOM in an accusative language, i.e. that it must be assigned exactly once per clause).

However, this would not shed much light on the question of Basque, since the analysis of morphological ergativity is and remains a major problem for generative treatments of ergative languages. Still, the generalization we have reached so far is that ERG in Basque is not dependent on the transitivity of the clause, but rather on the class of verb. The subject of a given transitive verb is always in ERG case, even if the verb is used intransitively. This will become even more evident in section 2.2 on intransitive unergative verbs.

2.2. Intransitive unergatives

There is a group of verbs in Basque which are intransitive in practice but take an ERG Agent: unergative verbs. Traditionally, these are referred to as transitive verbs, with the proviso that they do not normally take an object. These come in two groups, the somewhat larger group consisting of N-V clusters such as *barre egin* 'to laugh, lit. laughter-do' or *negar egin* 'to weep, lit. cry-do', and the somewhat smaller group consisting of simple verb roots such as *dantzatu* 'to dance', *funtzionatu* 'to function'[10].

The first group is directly comparable to noun incorporation constructions in Eskimo-Aleut, with the obvious difference that such incorporation in Eskimo-Aleut implies that the Agent must appear in ABS, whereas the Basque Agent still appears in ERG (3). Laka (1993a) analyses this such that the cognate or incorporated object in Basque is assigned ABS, whereas an incorporated N° in Eskimo-Aleut is not assigned ABS.

3.   Amaia-k hitz egin   du.
     PN-ERG   word do   AUX.3sA-3sE
     'Amaia has spoken'.

This group has received most attention for the comparison of Basque and Eskimo-Aleut (Laka 1993a, Bobaljik 1993), presumably because the N element in the verb serves as evidence for transitivity. However, in many respects the second group (i.e. opaque unergatives) is much more interesting, in that the transitivity of such examples is more difficult to envisage, sometimes impossible (4).

4.   Ura-k   irakin   du.
     water-ERG   boil   AUX.3sA-3sE
     'The water has boiled'.

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[10] Ortiz de Urbina (1989:45-46) lists twenty such verbs. Not all of these verbs are, however, unergative in all dialects: in northern dialects some can behave like unaccusative verbs, taking absolutive subjects. I thank Xabier Artiagoitia for bringing this fact to my attention.

In an example like 4, any explanation which makes reference to the transitivity of the verb *irakin*, or which claims that ABS has been assigned to a covert argument of some kind is not particularly enlightening – there is no obvious Patient which may have been assigned the ABS case required by Bobaljik's Obligatory Case Parameter. It would rather seem that example 4 is evidence that the OCP does not hold in Basque[11]. This is the stance I shall take in this paper.

It may be worth-while to insert a comment here concerning the auxiliary verb. So far, I have deferred to traditional usage in glossing verbs with ergative agreement as having *double* agreement. Traditionally, the *d*-morpheme is assumed to reflect a 3.SG.ABS argument. However, both Trask (1981: 296-298) and Laka (1993b: 45) have argued convincingly that, since the realization of this 3.SG.ABS agreement morpheme does not appear to have any connection with any pronominal form (as do 1st and 2nd person agreement morphemes to their respective pronouns) and furthermore is dependent on tense and mood (it is realized variously as *d–*, *z–*, *l–*, *b–* and *Ø–*), the prefix is not actually an agreement marker, but rather a tense-mood morpheme indicating that there is no agreement realized (i.e. that 3.SG.ABS agreement has no overt realization). Thus, the fact that the verbal morphology in 4 is identical to that in a transitive clause such as 1a, 1b, is not evidence that 4 is transitive.

So far we have concluded that the assignation of ERG case in Basque has nothing to do with the *de facto* transitivity of a given clause. The simplest generalization is that one class of verbs takes ERG subjects, and another class of verb takes ABS subjects – regardless of the presence or absence of any object in the clause. The first class is prototypically transitive, but includes many intransitive verbs, which are termed unergatives. The second class is prototypically intransitive and unaccusative[12].

This is the type of system known variously as *Split-S* (Dixon 1994), *extended ergative* (Ortiz de Urbina 1989) or *active* (Bittner & Hale 1996, Harris 1981). I henceforth use the term *active*, since it is the most current to date. It should however be noted that this usage does not imply, as is sometimes assumed[13], that the alignment of a verb is fully predictable, given its semantics. There do exist correlations between activity and the unergative class, or between stativity and the unaccusative class. However, the semantics / syntax mapping is rife with exceptions.

3. THE CASES OF BASQUE

In the previous section, we concluded that the facts seem to point in the direction of an active rather than an ergative alignment for Basque. In this

[11] Which is, in fact, the claim that I intend to make in this paper, for which I shall present evidence in section 3.

[12] It seems, in fact, that this class is universally intransitive, unless we consider the very special theta-marking properties of verbs of motion (cf section 4.2. and Holmer (forthcoming)).

[13] cf Hewitt's (1987) critique of Harris (1981). Hewitt argues, contra Harris, that Georgian is ergative, not active, primarily because the class of unergative verbs is not semantically predictable. For our purpose here, however, the mere existence of opaque unergatives is evidence in favour of a split-S analysis.

section I intend to show how this situation correlates with other syntactic features of Basque. Specifically, I shall demonstrate that neither of the two cases ERG or ABS behaves as if it were structurally equivalent to NOM, and that this is a direct consequence of the active alignment of the language. The discussion in this section is presented in the Government and Binding framework.

3.1. ABS is not NOM

The morphologically most promising candidate for NOM status is ABS, partly because it is unmarked, and partly because this reflects its usage with the class of unaccusative verbs (which are traditionally considered intransitive, as opposed to unergative verbs, which are often analysed as underlyingly transitive). Let us examine the consequences of this view. In GB terms, this implies that ABS is assigned by virtue of some kind of relation with a functional category, be it I° or C°, or T°.

This is the avenue followed by Bittner & Hale 1996 (op cit p 26-29), who suggest that ABS (or, in their terminology, NOM) is assigned in a similar fashion to Warlpiri (Pama-Nyungan: Central Australia), namely via a *transparency chain* from C°. I shall not address the exact technicalities of their model here. However, the important consequence of this view (and, by extension, of any view which identifies ABS with NOM) is that we predict that, since each head C° (or whatever functional head it is that assigns NOM) is only able to assign one instance of NOM, ABS will appear exactly once per clause. We have already noted in section 2.2 that ABS is not obviously assigned in clauses with unergative predicates. However, it is much more problematic that ABS can be assigned several times within the same clause (5).

5   a.   Iñaki   ardoa   eda-te-ra joan da.
         PN-ABS   wine-ABS   drink-to   go   AUX.3sA
         'Iñaki has gone to drink wine'.

    b.   Ni   egunkaria   irakur-tzen   ari   naiz.
         I-ABS   newspaper-ABS   read-IPF   PROG   AUX.1sA
         'I am reading the newspaper'.

    c.   Peru   etxea   sal-tzen   saiatu   zen.
         PN-ABS   house-ABS   sell-IPF   try   AUX.PRET.3sA
         'Peru tried to sell the house'.

    d.   Begoña   euskara   irakas-ten hasi zen.
         PN-ABS   Basque   teach-IPF   begin AUX.PRET.3sA
         'Begoña started teaching Basque'.

In each of the above examples, the auxiliary (or finite verb in 5a) takes an ABS subject, and the main verb takes an ABS object. Consequently, ABS is realized twice. If ABS is assigned by a functional projection akin to I or C - i.e. a head associated with finiteness, and if each instance of the relevant functional projection is capable of assigning Case exactly once, this would imply that the embedded phrases in examples 5a - d necessarily would con-

tain this functional category. However, we have no evidence of such levels being present[14]. It seems *ad hoc* to postulate their (invisible) presence simply to motivate the treatment of ABS as NOM.

Rather, it seems suspicious that the insertion of another verb into the clause should appear to be sufficient to license another ABS argument, exactly as if ABS were assigned by the verb itself. This is in fact what is suggested by Ortiz de Urbina (1989) and especially Levin (1983). Both agree that an ABS complement of a verb is assigned Case directly by the verb. Levin goes one step further and claims that ABS is always assigned directly by the verb, i.e. that it is structurally the equivalent of ACC, even when it appears as the unaccusative clause subject[15].

I shall follow Levin in this claim, namely that ABS has exactly the same structural function as ACC: it is assigned directly by the verb to either a) its complement or b) the Specifier of its complement. An argument which is base-generated as the complement of a verb always surfaces in ACC Case, regardless of whether or not it is the only argument of the clause (and thus technically speaking the *subject*). Thus, the parametric difference between Basque and an accusative language at this level is that a Basque subject may surface in ACC, whereas an English subject must surface in NOM. Whether this is a consequence of Burzio's Generalization holding for English but not for Basque or whether it can be derived from more basic features of the two languages is a question which we will address in section 5.

3.2. ERG is not NOM

We have thus concluded that ABS, although morphologically unmarked, is not a suitable candidate for cross-linguistic identification with NOM: In this conclusion we follow Levin 1983, Laka 1993b and Bobaljik 1993. However, in the present section I intend to argue that this does not imply that ERG should be analysed as NOM.

In many respects, the structural features of ERG make it a more promising candidate for NOM status, although it is morphologically marked. It is structurally higher (cf. arguments supporting the view that the ERG argument is the subject of a transitive clause, i.e. that Basque has accusative syntax). More importantly, its distribution is much more restricted than ABS: whereas one instance of ABS can, in practice, be licensed by each occurrence of a verb, ERG normally only appears once per clause.

NOM is cross-linguistically assumed to be assigned to a functional Spec position (the usual candidate is SpecIP or SpecTP). Moreover, it is normally assumed to be assigned in a certain context, namely in connection with finiteness (or a section thereof, such as subject agreement[16]). In Basque, most

[14] Unless, of course, we are thinking of Agro, as is proposed by Bobaljik 1993 and Laka 1993a. Note, however, that this is actually an exact MPLT equivalent of direct ACC Case assignation by the verb in GB Theory.

[15] Ortiz de Urbina (1989) considers this option but decides against it on the grounds that it would disobey Burzio's (1986) Generalization (i.e. that unaccusatives cannot assign ACC, because they do not θ-mark an Agent). We will address the consequences for Burzio's Generalization in section 5.

[16] Thus, in a language such as Portuguese, where a nominative subject can occur with an infinitive, such an infinitive displays subject agreement (cf Raposo 1987). A potential problem for the present analysis is that nominative subjects can cooccur with non-finite verb forms in certain constructions in

environments where ERG can appear are finite: there are, however, two important exceptions: clause nominalizations (6a[17]) and agentive 'passive' constructions (6b). The latter type of construction is especially used in pseudo-relativizations such as 6c. The phrase of which the ERG argument is the subject is underlined for clarity.

6   a.   Ez   zuen   nahi   <u>gu-k</u>   <u>irratia eduki-tze-a</u>.
              NEG   PRET.(3sA).3sE   want   1p-ERG   radio   have-nominal
              'He didn't want us to have radio'.

        b.   Liburuak <u>atzo</u>   <u>zuk</u>   <u>erosi-a-k</u>   dira.
              book-pl yesterday   2p(pol)-ERG   buy-PRT-pl   AUX.3pA
              'The books were bought by you yesterday'.
              (Saltarelli 1988:218) (lit. 'The books are yesterday-bought-by-you'.)

        c.   <u>Gerra-k</u> <u>Euskal Herrian</u> <u>eragin-da-ko</u> lehen   biktima...
              war-ERG   Basque Country   cause-PRT-of   first   victim
              'The first victim caused in the Basque Country by the war...'

In the above three examples, ERG appears in an entirely non-finite environment, together with a nominalized verb (6a) or with an adjectival participle (6b, c). It follows that, unless we claim that 6a - c are covertly finite (a statement for which we have no evidence), ERG cannot realistically be identified with NOM.

If, on the other hand, we were to claim that 6a - c are covertly finite, we should have to explain the difference between these and overtly finite counterparts, as in 7a - c.

7   a.   Ez   zuen   nahi
              NEG   PRET.(3sA).3sE   want
                  <u>gu-k</u>   <u>irratia</u> <u>eduki</u> <u>genezan</u>.
                  1p-ERG   radio   have   3sA-1pE-PRET-SUBJ
              'He didn't want that we should have radio'.

        b.   Liburu-ak   <u>zu-k</u>   <u>atzo</u>
              book-pl   2s(pol)-ERG   yesterday
                  <u>erosi</u>   <u>zenituenak</u>   dira.
                  buy   3pA-2s(pol)E-PRET-REL-DET-PL   AUX.3pA
              'The books are those which you bought yesterday'.

Spanish as well, despite the fact that Spanish lacks personal infinitive forms parallel to Portuguese *terem* 'have.INF-3p', *ler-es* 'read.INF-3s' etc. Such constructions include the *gerundio absoluto*, e.g. *Estando mi madre en casa...* 'When my mother is at home...'. It should be noted, however, that this type of construction is distributionally more restricted than the type of construction we are looking at in Basque. For this reason, I shall not further address this question in the present paper.

    [17] Examples 6a and 6c quoted from *Espainako Gerra Zibila Euskal Herrian* [The Spanish Civil War in the Basque Country], an article series in the newspaper *Euskaldunon Egunkaria*.

c. <u>Gerrak</u> <u>Euskal Herrian</u> <u>eragin</u> <u>zuen</u>
war-ERG Basque Country cause 3sA-3sE-PRET-REL
       lehen biktima....
       first victim
'The first victim which the war caused in the Basque Country...'

One possibility might be that the finite Agr category responsible for ERG is present, but that the auxiliary where it would appear is not phonetically realized unless Tense is present (cf also Ortiz de Urbina 1989: 175ff). In this case, 6 a-c would differ from 7 a-c not by virtue of being non-finite, but rather by virtue of being tenseless.

This would seem to indicate that Case assignation in tenseless and tensed clauses behaves in exactly the same fashion - i.e. that it is only the presence or absence of Tense itself which constitutes the difference. The relevant Agr category assigning ERG Case would be present in either case. However, examples such as 8 show that there is one important difference between Case assignation and Agreement - certain Case configurations are possible in non-finite clauses (8a) but impossible if the arguments are to be reflected in Agreement (8b)[18].

8a. Gaizki irudi-tzen zait   <u>zuk</u> <u>ni</u> <u>harakina-ri</u> <u>sal-tze-a</u>.
  wrong seem-PROG 3sA-1sD-AUX 2s-ERG 1s butcher-DAT sell-IPF-DET
  "It seems wrong to me for you to sell me to the butcher".

b. *Zuk harakinari ni   saldu "n-(a)i-o-zu"[19].
  2s-ERG butcher-DAT 1s-ABS sell 1sA-3sD-2sE-AUX
  for: 'You have sold me to the butcher'.

It is difficult to conceive that there is something inherently problematic about the phonetic realization of the auxiliary in 8b - rather, what seems to be causing the difficulty in 8b is the complexity of the Agr configuration itself, a configuration which would still exist, albeit covertly, in 8a, if we assume that Agr is covertly present in tenseless clauses.

Therefore, there is no reason to believe that the constructions in 6 (or 8a) involve any type of finiteness, and if they do not, then the Case of the ERG subject is not assigned in the same way as NOM is assigned in an accusative language and should not be identified with it[20].

NOM is a Case which normally only appears in finite environments, but which is, once this condition is respected, open to any subject argument. ERG, on the other hand, is a Case which can appear in nominalized or adjectival non-finite environments, as well as finite environments, but which is only open to subjects of transitive or unergative verbs.

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[18] Data from Laka (1993b), cf also Laka (1995): *A brief grammar of Euskara, the Basque language*, Ch 6, exs. 48b, 49. If an auxiliary has triple agreement, the ABS argument must be 3rd person. However, the configuration as such is grammatical, as long as no agreement is required. (Since 3rd person agreement is arguably a tense-mood marker signalling the lack of 1st/2nd person agreement (cf section 2.2), this restriction for triple agreement effectively limits agreement to two arguments).

[19] The form *n-(a)i-o-zu* is a regular hypothetical formation covering the relevant configuration. It does not, however, exist, nor does any other with the same meaning (cf Laka 1995).

Thus, it seems to clear that ERG is assigned at a level lower than that at which NOM is assigned, partly to explain its possible occurrence in non-finite environments, and partly to explain its distributional restrictions. The position which most readily tallies with both of these facts is SpecVP – the position where the Agent is base-generated, and moreover a position which is structurally below the levels usually associated with finiteness.

Thus, my proposal is that ERG is the Case assigned to the argument in SpecVP under government from I° or from an element responsible for the nominalization of VP. This Case, which we shall continue to term ERG, is therefore something which does not occur in an accusative language. I suggest that it is an instantiation of a cross-linguistically identifiable Case ERG (we shall see further cross-linguistic evidence for this view in section 5). It follows that there in no Case in Basque which can be identified with NOM.

3.3. Auxiliaries and ERG - further evidence

In the previous section it was suggested that ERG is assigned to SpecVP by I°. In the present section it will be shown that ERG is not simply a marker of agentivity or a morpheme assigned indiscriminately to SpecVP, but is a Case assigned in a certain structural configuration, and we shall also identify this configuration.

The interesting point to note here is the behaviour of the case-marking system in interaction with the progressive auxiliary *ari* 'to be doing'[21]. If *ari* is used, the subject of a transitive or unergative verb is realized in ABS, and the auxiliary only reflects absolute agreement (cf also 5b above).

9   a.   Ni-k   ardo beltza   eda-ten   dut.
          1s-ERG   wine black   drink-IPF   3sA-1sE-AUX
          'I drink red wine (i.e. usually)'.

      b.   Ni   ardo beltza   eda-ten   ari   naiz.
          1s-ABS   wine black   drink-IPF   PROG   1sA-AUX
          'I am drinking red wine (i.e. now)'.

If ERG is a marker of agentivity, the facts in 9 are rather difficult to explain. We expect the argument structure of the verb *edan* 'to drink' to be the same regardless of whether the progressive auxiliary *ari* is used or not, so we expect the Agent *ni* '1.SG' to be generated in the same position in either case. Yet, in 9a the Agent is in ERG, in 9b it is in ABS. Thus, the use of *ari* results in the prevention of ERG being assigned the Agent, ABS being assigned instead.

The simplest solution is that *ari* is actually blocking the assignation of ERG by intervening hierarchically between the ERG Case assigner and SpecVP, and that, being a verb, it is in itself capable of assigning ABS to the

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[20] Furthermore, if we choose to equate ERG with NOM, we should also have to account for the fact that ERG can occur in contexts such as 6, whereas NOM can not occur in the corresponding contexts in an accusative language like English.

[21] This feature is shared by other verbs, such as *hasi* 'to begin' (cf 5d). However, *hasi* is less obviously an auxiliary, so the argumentation here will be restricted to the case of *ari*.

specifier of its complement. Thus, it follows that *ari* appears in the same position with respect to SpecVP in 9b as does the ERG Case assigner in 9a.

In an *ari* construction, the imperfective aspectual morpheme (*–tzen*) appears on the lower verb. It follows that *ari* takes an AspP as its complement rather than only a VP[22]. Therefore, it cannot be the Asp° head which is the ERG Case assigner, since *ari*, being outside AspP, would not be able to block Case assignation from Asp°. Thus, ERG Case must be assigned from a position above Asp°. This position is in most models of GB considered to be I° (or, in a split-INFL model, a subcategory of INFL).

This implies suggesting that Case can be assigned from I° or V° not to the Specifier of its complement (as traditionally assumed for Exceptional Case Marking, henceforth ECM), but rather to the Specifier of the complement of its complement (i.e. to SpecVP across Asp°). This would amount to Case being assigned in a configuration more distant than that of government. However, recent work in syntactic theory (Chomsky 1992 and related work in MPLT) has suggested that head movement (in this case V° to Asp° movement) can serve to enlarge the domain of the V° (for our purposes making SpecVP behave as if it were the Specifier of the AspP rather than VP, as far as its relation to I° is concerned). Thus the presence of the functional category Asp° is not necessarily a problem for this analysis.

In this respect, the effect of a V° head such as *ari* 'PROG' seems not so much to be to block the assignation of ERG, but rather to assign ABS to SpecVP instead. This implies that ECM of this type is blocked, not by the fact that there is an intervening category as such, but rather by the fact that there is an intervening Case-assigner. This can be summarized as follows:

ECM can be blocked:
  a) by an intervening Spec position
      (i.e. Case is assigned to the closest available argument position)
  b) by an intervening Case-assigning head
   (i.e. Case is assigned by the closest possible Case-assigner)

Given these two assumptions we are able to account for the assignation of ERG and ABS by I° and *ari* respectively, without the presence of aspectual morphology on the verb being problematic.

To summarize, ERG is assigned by I° to SpecVP, and since AspP intervenes, it follows that ERG is assigned by I° *across* AspP, which is only possible if AspP lacks a Specifier position which can be assigned Case[23]. The assumed structures are illustrated below.

---

[22] Laka (1994:10ff) has shown that an analysis of Basque requires a separate Asp component. If Asp° receives no marked value (or is not present) the verb form is synthetically rather than analytically conjugated. Furthermore, the fact that certain moods (imperative, potential and subjunctive) require an aspectually unmarked V root is easier to account for in terms of a separate Asp category than in terms of aspect as an inherent marking on V: according to this account, the relevant auxiliaries (imperative, subjunctive and potential) subcategorize for a VP rather than AspP. This is no way affects the realization of ERG, showing that Asp° can not be involved in the assignation of ERG.

[23] It would possible to dispense with ABS Case-marking across AspP if we assume that the Agent is serving as complement of *ari*. However, this implies that *ari* must have a double complement structure, since it also takes an AspP complement. While we have no evidence that *ari* has a double-VP

Fig. 1
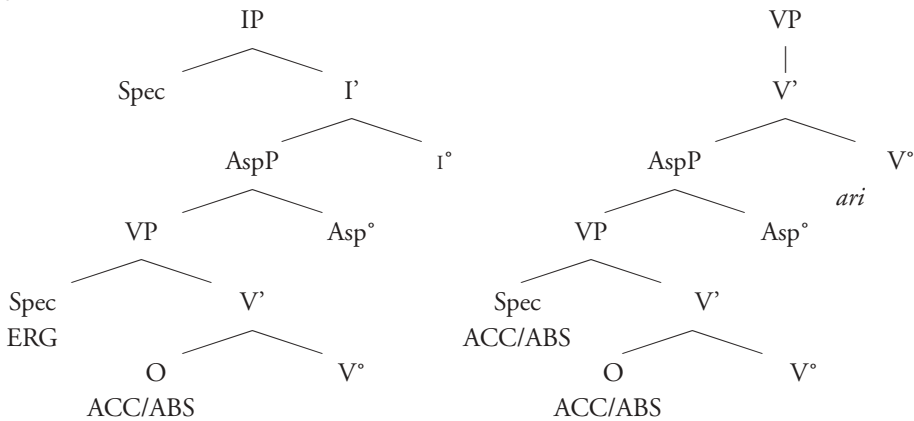
Furthermore, the non-existence of SpecAspP serves an even more important pupose: ensuring that an unaccusative subject can never raise to a position where it would be assigned ERG – if it could, ERG would not be restricted to Agents, in which case the term ERG would be misplaced, since its distribution would be identical to that of NOM[24].

3.4. ERG and finiteness

So far we have demonstrated that, in a finite context, ERG is assigned to SpecVP by I°. We have also shown that the evidence indicates that this takes place across AspP, and it is suggested that this is possible because Basque AspP lacks a specifier position.

However, the reader will no doubt have noticed that the relevant examples in section 3.3 are all finite, and that we have actually not addressed the question of how SpecVP is assigned ERG in non-finite contexts. Since I° is not obviously present, it appears at first sight that ERG is assigned differently in finite and non-finite environments.

At the same time, the assignation of ERG in non-finite environments is an important clue as to the nature of ERG (i.e. that it is assigned at a relatively low level compared with English NOM). Therefore, this argument loses some of its weight unless we are able to account for the assignation of ERG in finite and non-finite environments in a consistent fashion. How, then, is ERG assigned in non-finite environments, and what is the common denominator linking this to assignation by I°?

In fact, there are three alternative possibilities: a) ERG is always assigned by I°: I° is present in both finite and non-finite contexts (overt in the former

structure, such a structure is tentatively suggested for *saiatu* 'to try', cf section 4.2. Moreover, it should be noted that, while such a double complement structure would solve the problem of ABS assignation across AspP, it would do nothing to the problem of ERG assignation across AspP. Therefore we have no good reason to revise the structure shown here.

[24] As we shall see in section 5, this point is actually quite relevant under the approach assumed here.

and covert in the latter); b) ERG is assigned by ı° in finite clauses and by another element in non-finite environments; c) ERG is assigned by the same element or feature, which is located in ı° in a finite clause and in another position in a non-finite construction.

The most uniform of these avenues is a), which, however, does not address the obvious problem of inflection not being realized. The solution which seems to offer the greatest uniformity while not ignoring the surface differences is c). However, isolating the relevant feature still requires defining the positions from which it can operate. Hence b) must be the first avenue which we explore.

We have noted that ERG is assigned exclusively to SpecVP, and while Asp° or AspP have no effect on this assignment, a verb governing AspP is capable of preventing it. What are then the characteristics of non-finite environments where ERG can be assigned?

Ortiz de Urbina (1989) suggests that ERG is assigned in tenseless clauses if the tenseless clause itself bears morphological case (op. cit p. 176). Why is then a tenseless clause case-marked in itself? The evident answer is because it is nominalized or adjectivalized. In a typical nominalized phrase licensing an ERG subject, the verb carries aspectual morphology (e.g. -*tze*-), definiteness morphology[25] (e.g. -*a*-) and case morphology (e.g. -*k*), cf 10 (Ortiz de Urbina 1989, p. 171). As usual, the relevant clause is underlined.

10. <u>Ni-k</u> <u>lagun-a</u> <u>azken</u> <u>aldi-z</u> <u>ikus-te-a-k</u> tristatu hinduen.
     1s-ERG friend-DET last time-INS see-IPF-DET-ERG sadden 2sA.3sE.PRET
     'My seeing the friend for the last time saddened you'.

Evidently, the minimal difference between a non-finite context licensing ERG can be expressed in three different ways: 1) the AspP itself bears a +N feature; 2) the AspP is governed by D°; 3) the AspP is Case-marked. As far as 1) is concerned, while it is true that AspP is nominalized or adjectivalized, this is not morphologically evident except by recourse to points 2) or 3): there is no actual nominalization morphology realized (other than morphology normally used *with* nouns, such as definiteness). In essence, we appear to have an AspP, in lieu of an NP, directly governed by D° - AspP is nominalized by virtue of actually behaving like a nominal[26].

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[25] The definiteness affix -*a*- is not overtly realized in all cases.

[26] Artiagoitia (1995) argues that the morpheme -*te*- in a nominalization (analysed as Asp° here) is an N° head which simultaneously serves to convey aspectual information. While it is clear that Artiagoitia is right in referring to the -*te*- affix in this context as being nominal in nature, the model I present here capitalizes on the obvious morphological parallelism between the behaviour of -*te*- in finite clauses and nominalizations. For this reason I choose to analyse this category uniformly as Asp.

Fig. 2[27]

```
                              DP
                    ┌─────────────┴──────┐
                  AspP                    D°
              ┌─────┴─────┐              −a−
             VP          Asp°
         ┌────┴────┐     −te−
       Spec        V'
       ERG    ┌─────┴─────┐
       nik    O           v°
           ACC/ABS        ikus−
           laguna
```
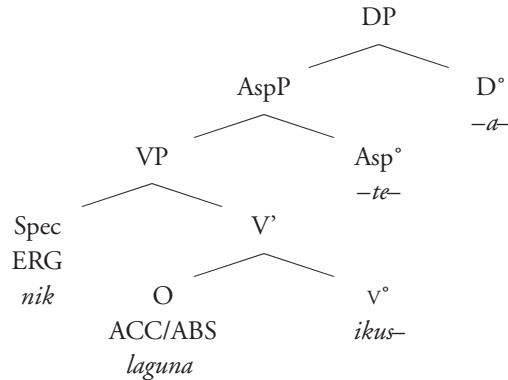
According to this interpretation, the position in the resulting DP which bears the same relationship to SpecVP as I° does in a finite clause is D°. This suggests that ERG is assigned by D° in non-finite environments and by I° in finite environments. The common denominator for the assignation of ERG thus seems to be that it is assigned by a functional head immediately governing AspP (either D° or I°)[28].

In fact, there seems to be a more intimate connection between I° and D° which has not yet been fully investigated. Bittner & Hale (1996), in a discussion on the assignation of ERG[29], refer to the "*parallel* functional head in the two systems of extended projection – I in the verbal system, D in the nominal system" (op. cit. p. 60). It is this parallel head which I suggest is capable of assigning ERG to SpecVP. We shall examine the cross-linguistic consequences of this view in section 5.1.2.

The assignation of ERG by D° poses one other problem, however. Cross-linguistically, in an NP (i.e. a non-deverbal DP), the Case which is normally realized in the Spec position governed by D° is genitive (henceforth GEN), not ERG. This reflects the fact that a possessor (commonly assumed to be located in SpecNP) appears (if overtly case-marked) in GEN Case. This is tantamount to saying that D° is capable of assigning either ERG or GEN, depending on the circumstances.

However, it is quite possible tht the assignation of cases is dependent not only on the identity of the Case-assigning head but also on the category of the complement. Thus while D° assigns GEN to SpecNP, this need not necessarily imply that it cannot assign ERG to SpecVP. It is interesting to note in this context that arguments of nouns (i.e. nouns derived from verbs using one of a set of derivational suffixes, such as −*keta* etc) carry GEN, regardless

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[27] I have not addressed the question of whether DP has a Spec position.
[28] Ortiz de Urbina (1989:201-202) mentions a suggestion by Laka, where such a nominalization would be a D taking IP as its complement. Under such an analysis we can simply assume that ERG is always assigned by I°, making the analysis simpler. However, the purpose of the present analysis is to minimize the number of categories assumed in a certain context to those for which we have morphological evidence - in this case AspP.
[29] The details of which are not, however, the same as the one proposed here.

of whether they are agents or patients (11a), corresponding to ERG and ABS for -*tze*- nominalizations (11b) and finite clauses (11c)[30].

11 a.   aita-ren   berebila-ren   erosketa
          father-GEN   car-GEN   buy-NOM
          'father's buying of a car' (Eguzkitza 1993: 171)

    b.   Ez   nuen   nahi   aita-k   berebila eros-te-a.
         NEG   1sE-3sA-PRET   want   father-ERG   car-ABS buy-IPF-DET
         'I didn't want father to buy a car'.

    c.   Aita-k   berebila   erosi   zuen.
         father-ERG   car-ABS   buy   3sA-3sE-PRET
         'Father bought a car'.

Thus it is quite conceivable that the GEN Case assigned to arguments of derived deverbal nouns corresponds functionally and even structurally to ERG and ABS assigned to arguments of nominalized VP's. However, the important point to note for the purpose of the argument presented here is that the identity of the Case assigned by D° depends on the position to which it is assigned. We shall return to this connection between ERG and GEN in section 5.1.2.

4. THE QUESTION OF CONTROL

So far I have presented an analysis of Basque clause structure which deals with AGT and PAT (or rather SpecVP and O) as syntactic primitives, associated with ERG and ABS respectively, but which makes no reference to the notion of Subject. It has been noted in the literature, however, that the concept of subject is still a useful one in Basque (cf Ortiz de Urbina 1989). Over and above obvious relations which deal with the structural scope of arguments in the clause (relevant for reflexivization, cf 12a, b) or which make reference to the highest argument in the clause (relevant for coordination reduction, cf 12c[31]), there are other constructions, namely control constructions, which make direct reference to a concept of subject.

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[30] Artiagoitia (p.c.) notes that ERG is normally replaced by GEN in nominalized phrases where the determiner is not the article –*a* but the demonstrative *hori* 'that', as in ??*Jonek* (Jon-ERG) / *Jonen* (Jon-GEN) *arrazoi barik barre egite hori* 'John's (that) laughing without any reason'. This does not only concern the case assignment to SpecVP, since the same facts obtain for absolutive subjects, as in ??*Jon* (Jon-ABS) / *Jonen* (Jon-GEN) *leku batetik bestera ibiltze hori* 'John's (that) going from one place to another'. Thus it seems likely that the presence of *hori* rather than -*a* is not relevant in particular for the choice of ERG or GEN, but rather serves as an indication that the entire phrase is nominal rather than verbal, and that the arguments of the verb are case-marked as arguments of a noun. This evidently displays a minimal difference to nominalizations with –*tzea*.

[31] 12c is quoted from Ortiz de Urbina 1989:23. It is particularly illustrative in that it combines several factors, semantic, pragmatic and morphological, all of which support an interpretation where *semea* 'the son' is coreferent with the implied subject of *klasera joan zen* 'went to class', and yet these factors cannot change the unmarked interpretation that it is the person who left his/her son at school who subsequently went to classes.

12 a. Peru-k   bere burua   ikusi du.
        PN-ERG   own   head-ABS   see   3sA-3sE-AUX
        'Peru saw himself'.

    b. *Bere   burua-k   Peru   ikusi   du.
        own   head-ERG   PN-ABS   see   3sA-3sE-AUX
        Intended reading: '*Himself saw Peru'.

    c. Semea   eskolan   utzi   eta   klasera   joan   zen.
        son-ABS   school-in leave and   class-to   go   3sA-PRET
        'S/he left his/her son at school and went to class'.

Control structures are characterized by the presence of a covert argument (PRO) in an embedded non-finite context - this covert element must be the 'subject', in Basque as in English. Thus it must fill the position of an ERG element in a transitive / unergative context and that of an ABS element in an unaccusative context.

There are various types of control structures, such as object control with jussive verbs (13a, cf Ortiz de Urbina 1989:15), subject control with certain auxiliaries such as 'to want' (13b) and participial indirect questions (13c).

13 a. [PRO$_i$ gaurko kazeta   erosteko]   eskatu   di-o$_i$-t.
                 today-of newspaper   buy-IPF-of ask   3sA-3sD-1sE.AUX
        'I asked him [PRO to buy today's newspaper]'.

    b. [PRO$_i$ etxera   joan]   nahi   d-u-t$_i$.
                    house-to   go   want   3sA-AUX-3sE
        'I want [PRO to go home]'.

    c. Nik$_i$ ez   dakit   [PRO$_i$ zer   egin].
        1s-ERG   NEG   3sA-know-1sE   what?   do
        'I don't know [what PRO to do]'.

Ortiz de Urbina's (1989) discussion of the status of PRO concentrates on participial indirect questions, particularly since he is testing the subject properties of PRO in ergative structures, and cross-linguistic evidence (Dixon 1979) suggests that jussive verbs and auxiliary subject control universally pattern accusatively. Given that I do not assume an ergative structure, but rather an active structure, for Basque, it follows that these three types are equally suitable for our purpose, namely to explain the subject properties of PRO without making reference to the concept of 'subject'.

4.1. Object control

Another reason why Ortiz de Urbina does not primarily consider object control with jussive verbs is that it is not a construction entailing obligatory control: thus, the subject position of the embedded complement may be overt and have reference independent of the matrix clause (14).

14. Ni-k   ikusteko   agindu   d-u.
    1s-ERG   see-IPF-of   order   3sA–3sE.AUX
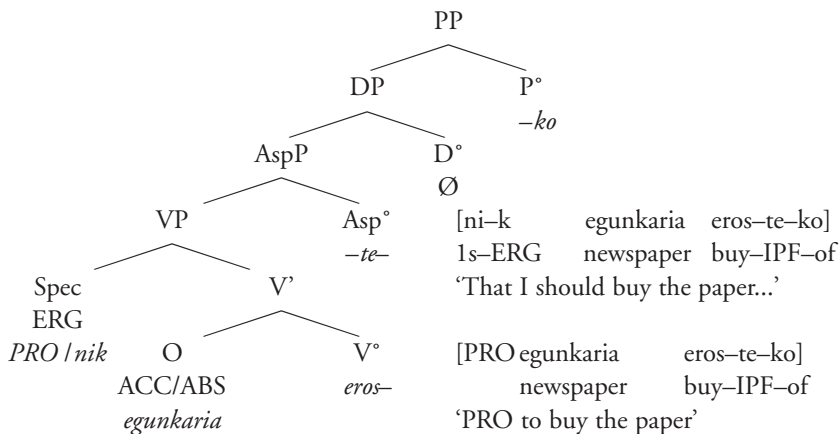   'He ordered that I see'. (Ortiz de Urbina 1989:16)

In my view this does not necessarily affect the issue, since we still have to explain the occurrence of controlled PRO in examples like 13a. In fact, the contrast between 13a and 14 is particularly illuminating, since it shows the minimal contrast available between controlled PRO and an overt argument. An overt argument has independent reference, and PRO has controlled reference – otherwise they appear in exactly the same context[32].

Let us therefore assume, for argument's sake, that PRO (or, to use a more theory-neutral term, a covert controlled subject) and a lexical argument can be realized in exactly the same context, and that the difference between 13a and 14 is a consequence, not of any structural properties of the clause, but rather of the difference between the elements themselves. PRO has no independent reference, so it must seek reference from an antecedent (failing that, as with uncontrolled PRO, its reference becomes arbitrary).

Following this line, the subject properties of PRO derive, not from its appearance in a discrete subject position, but rather from its ability to find a controlling antecedent. PRO can only find a controlling antecedent if it is the highest argument in its clause – if PRO is in object position of a transitive verb, the only possible antecedent would be the AGT, in which case we would not be dealing with control at all[33].

Thus, according to this view, object control structures in Basque do not require a discrete subject position which can be Case-marked or not Case-marked depending on the structure. Rather, subject status is purely relative, making reference to the possibility of PRO finding a controlling antecedent in the matrix clause.

Fig. 3


```
                              PP
                          /        \
                        DP          P°
                      /    \        –ko
                   AspP      D°
                  /    \      Ø
               VP       Asp°      [ni–k        egunkaria   eros–te–ko]
              /  \      –te–       1s–ERG      newspaper   buy–IPF–of
           Spec    V'              'That I should buy the paper...'
           ERG    /   \
        PRO / nik  O      V°       [PRO egunkaria        eros–te–ko]
               ACC/ABS  eros–          newspaper        buy–IPF–of
               egunkaria              'PRO to buy the paper'
```

[32] Ortiz de Urbina (1989:173ff) remarks on the alternation between PRO and lexical subject. He subsequently mentions (op cit: 185ff) that a possible solution might be that Basque INFL serves as a governor to license a lexical subject (by virtue of containing a covert AGR) but not as a governor according to Binding Theory (by virtue of being tenseless), see also Sigurðsson 1991 for a similar analysis of other facts in Icelandic. However, this solution is not applicable to the analysis presented here, since I have not assumed any AGR category in non-finite contexts.

[33] Hualde (1988) uses this type of configuration to account for one type of reflexives in Basque (those not involving the overt anaphor *bere burua* 'his/her head').

Since the embedded verb is marked with the locative genitive suffix *–ko*, a postposition, I assume the presence of a PP projection here, taking a DP as its complement[34]. Thus the structure required within the embedded clause is DP, exactly the amount of structure warranted by the overt morphology, and at the same time sufficient to ensure the ERG Case-marking of an overt AGT (if one is present).

4.2. Subject control

With subject control constructions, as with object control constructions, the embedded covert argument (PRO) may only be the subject of its domain, regardless of the type of verb. However, there is one important difference – here, we are dealing with obligatory control, in that the PRO in the embedded domain may not be replaced by a lexical subject.

The arguments presented here circle primarily about the behaviour of verbs such as *nahi* 'to want', *behar*[35] 'to need' and *saiatu* 'to try'. Other control verbs, such as *hasi* 'to begin' do not necessarily warrant the projection of a control structure, and therefore it is simplest to analyse them as simple auxiliaries on a par with *ari* 'PROGRESSIVE' (cf section 4.4).

Assuming the same analysis as previously, namely that the embedded highest argument can be either coreferent or non-coreferent with the subject of the control verb, and assuming that a coreferent element must be an anaphor rather than a pronoun (according to principle B of Binding Theory), it follows that we have two possible configurations in the complement clause (15). (Recall that a PRO realized in a position other than the highest of the complement clause is bound within its own clause, thus behaving like a reflexive rather than like a controlled argument).

15   a.   *Ni–k   [zuk   liburua   erosi]   nahi   d–u–t.
          1s–ERG   2s–ERG   book   buy   want   3sA–AUX–1sE
          Intended reading: 'I want you to buy a book'.

      b.   Ni–k$_i$ [PRO$_i$ liburua   erosi]   nahi   d–u–t$_i$.
          1s–ERG   book   buy   want   3sA–AUX–1sE
          'I want to buy a book'.

      c.   *Ni–k   [Amaia   eskola–ra joan]   nahi   d–u–t.
          1s–ERG   PN   school–to go   want   3sA–AUX–1sE
          Intended reading: 'I want Amaia to go to school'.

      d.   Ni–k$_i$ [PRO$_i$ eskola–ra joan]   nahi   d–u–t$_i$.
          1s–ERG   school–to go   want   3sA–AUX–1sE
          'I want to go to school'.

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[34] The absence of the determiner *–a* need not concern us here – *–a* is never realized with *-ko*. I gratefully acknowledge a helpful suggestion from Xabier Artiagoitia in this context.

[35] Note that *behar* is not a direct equivalent of English 'must' but rather of of 'to need'. As is the case with 'to need' (but not 'must'), *behar* can assign a θ-role to its subject, cf the example *Amaiak aita etortzea behar du.* 'Amaia needs (/*must) that her father should come'. I thank Xabier Artiagoitia for this information.

The grammatical structure requires the embedded clause to contain PRO. Given the analysis of Basque case which I have presented, this cannot be derived from Case requirements, since both *zu* in 15a and *Amaia* in 15c would be Case-marked in situ. Therefore we must assume that some other principle prevents the generation of 15a, c.

The first point we should note is that the configurations 15a and 15c are not impossible in themselves. What is impossible is their cooccurrence with the bare verbs *erosi* and *joan*[36]. If the complement is expressed as a nominalized clause (16a, b) or a finite clause (16c, d), the result is grammatical.

16　a. Ni–k　　[zu–k　　liburua　eros–te–a]　　　nahi　d–u–t.
　　　　1s–ERG　　2s–ERG　　book　　buy–IPF–DET　　want　　3sA–AUX–1sE
　　　　'I want you to buy the book'.

　　b. Ni–k　　[Amaia　　eskola–ra　joa–te–a]　　　nahi　d–u–t.
　　　　1s–ERG　　PN　　　　school–to　go–IPF–DET　　want　　3sA–AUX–1sE
　　　　'I want Amaia to go to school'.

　　c. Ni–k　[zu–k　liburua　eros　d–eza–zu–n]　　　nahi　d–u–t.
　　　　1s–ERG　2s–ERG　book　　buy　3sA–SUBJ–2sE–COMP　want　3sA–AUX–1sE
　　　　'I want that you should buy the book'.

　　d. Ni–k　　[Amaia　eskola–ra　joan　d–adi–n]　　　　nahi　d–u–t.
　　　　1s–ERG　PN　　　school–to　go　3sA–SUBJ–COMP　want　3sA–AUX–1sE
　　　　'I want that Amaia should go to school'.

Thus, if the argument structure of a complement clause is complete, the clause itself must be realized as a nominalization or as a finite clause (never as VP or AspP). Following our analysis of the Basque case system, we must assume that this has nothing to do with Case (again, if it did, then we would have to assume that some instances of ABS are assigned in the same structural position as ERG, which is unmotivated).

However, it seems we can derive it from the Extended Projection Principle (EPP): at s–structure, there must be (at least) one element which has been externalized from VP[37]. If the EPP in turn derives from a predication requirement, namely that a proposition must involve a predication between one externalized element and the rest of VP (the predicate), this accounts for both of the above possibilities equally straightforwardly. Either a finite clause must be projected, to allow the externalization of an argument to take place, or the clause must be nominalized, so as to make the structure exempt from the EPP (a nominalized clause, being an argument rather than a proposition, has no predication requirements, and is thus not expected to be subject to the EPP).

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[36] However, ERG may cooccur with certain participial indirect questions (Artiagoitia, p.c., cf also section 4.3). The present analysis cannot account for this type of construction, unless we assume that such constructions actually do project an I° head which is capable of assigning ERG. This is the analysis which I tentatively suggest in this case.

[37] This is a rather weak formulation; stronger ones state that SpecIP must be projected and filled (Haegeman 1994:255ff).

Thus, according to this analysis, we can generalize that a saturated argument structure must either project an external subject position to satisfy the EPP, or itself become an argument to evade the requirements of the EPP. On the other hand, an unsaturated argument structure, where an argument position is antecedent-governed from outside the immediate domain (i.e. a controlled PRO or an NP-trace[38]), obeys the EPP.

A nominalized or finite complement clause may naturally have one or more covert arguments (Basque being a pro-drop language). One of these may be interpreted as being coreferent with a matrix argument (17).

17 a. Txakurra–k$_i$ ez   d–u   nahi [Amaia–k Ø$_i$ jo–tze–a].
        dog–ERG   NEG 3sA–AUX.3sE want PN–ERG   Ø   beat–IPF–DET
        'The dog doesn't want to be beaten by Amaia'.

    b. [Ni–k Ø$_i$ lagun–tze–a]   nahi   ba–d–u–k$_i$
        1s–ERG Ø   help–IPF–DET want   if–3sA–AUX–2smE
                                  lagundu–ko d–i–a–t.
                                  help–FUT   3sA–AUX–2smD–1sE
        'If you want me to help you, I'll help you'. (*Babilonia* p 118)

    c. Txakurra–k$_i$ ez   d–u   nahi
        dog–ERG   NEG   3sA–AUX.3sE want
                     [Amaia–k Ø$_i$ jo   d$_i$–eza–n].
                     PN–ERG Ø   beat   3sA–SUBJ.3sE–COMP
        'The dog doesn't want that Amaia should beat it'.

This does not imply that the construction is equivalent to a passive embedded clause with PRO as the derived subject[39], as can be seen from the fact that the empty argument position may be filled by an overt pronoun (18).

18. Txakurra–k$_i$ ez   d–u   nahi [Amaia–k bera$_i$ jo–tze–a].
     dog–ERG   NEG 3sA–AUX.3sE want PN–ERG   3s   beat–IPF–DET
     'The dog doesn't want Amaia to beat it'.

If the subject, i.e. the highest argument, of the embedded structure were coreferent with a matrix argument, the nominalization would be unnecessary, since the structure, being unsaturated, would satisfy the EPP as an AspP / VP. Therefore a nominalization or finite clause would only be projected if the highest argument of the embedded argument structure is not coreferent with an argument of the matrix clause.

The other type of subject control verb we shall address is the unaccusative *saiatu* 'to try' (19). Being an unaccusative, *saiatu* is problematic as a con-

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[38] Observe the parallellism between PRO and NP-trace. Both are traditionally assumed to derive from Case requirements, whereas in the analysis presented here, both crucially derive from the EPP.

[39] In fact, there is a true passive in northern dialects of Basque, which is entirely analogous to passives in e.g. English (with a passive participle and an auxiliary, Oyharçabal p.c.). However, this form is considered rather bookish by speakers of western dialects of Basque and would not be used in speech, although perhaps in writing (Artiagoitia, p.c.).

trol verb. Its status as a control verb implies that it takes a VP as its complement. At the same time, its status as an unaccusative requires that its subject be a d–object rather than a d–subject. In practice, therefore, *saiatu* takes two complements and no d–subject (Agent).

19. Peru   etxea   saltzen   saiatu   zen.
    PN–(ABS) house–(ABS) sell–IPF   try   3sA–PRET–AUX
    'Peru tried to sell the house'.

Thus, while the number of θ–roles assigned by *saiatu* is clearly two (suggesting a transitive VP structure), neither of these is realized in a position which would allow it to receive ERG Case-marking (suggesting that both are in a sense complements of v°).

Interestingly enough, the same facts obtain for another set of verbs in Basque, namely motion verbs such as *joan* 'to go', *etorri* 'to come'. Under any account, a motion verb assigns two θ–roles (Theme and Goal) but neither of these is a d–subject in Basque (since neither is assigned ERG).

In Holmer (forthcoming) the question of motion verbs is addressed in detail, and a double-VP structure is proposed which treats motion verbs like 'go' as unaccusative counterparts of 3–place verbs like 'put' or 'send'. The structures involved are illustrated below (cf 20a, b).

Fig 4.
a) put, send etc (3–place, transitive)   b) go, come etc (2–place, intransitive)
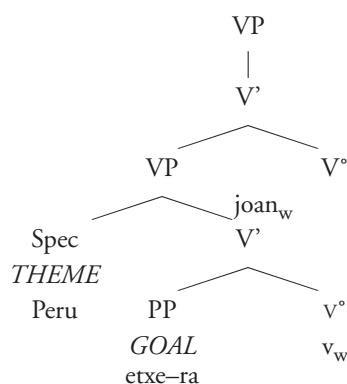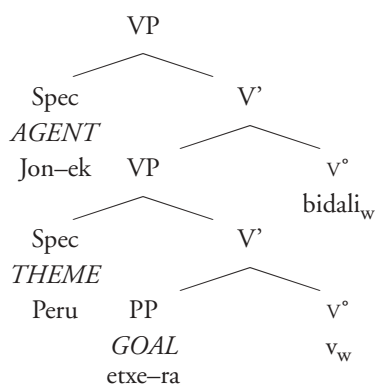
20 a. Jon–ek   Peru etxe–ra   bidali   zuen.
       PN–ERG   PN   house–to   send   3sA–3sE–PRET–AUX
       'Jon sent Peru home'.

    b. Peru   etxe–ra   joan   zen.
       PN   house–to   go   3sA–PRET–AUX
       'Peru went home'.

A verb like *joan* 'to go' is an unaccusative two–place verb, in exactly the same way as *saiatu* 'to try'. Moreover, this parallellism is accentuated by the fact that northern dialects of Basque have a VP suffixed by the directional

postposition –*ra* as the complement of the verb *entseiatu* 'to try' (cf 21, Oy-harçabal, p.c.).

21. Peru entseiatu zen   etxea–ren[40]   sal–tze–ra.
     PN   try   3sA–PRET–AUX   house–GEN   sell–IPF–to
     'Peru tried to sell the house'.

For this reason, I suggest the same structure for *saiatu* as for *joan*, a structure which may appear complex at first sight (see Fig 5), but which is actually motivated by the data (cf 22).

22. Peru etxea   sal–tzen saiatu   zen.
     PN   house s   ell–IPF   try   3sA–PRET–AUX
     'Peru tried to sell the house'.

Fig 5.
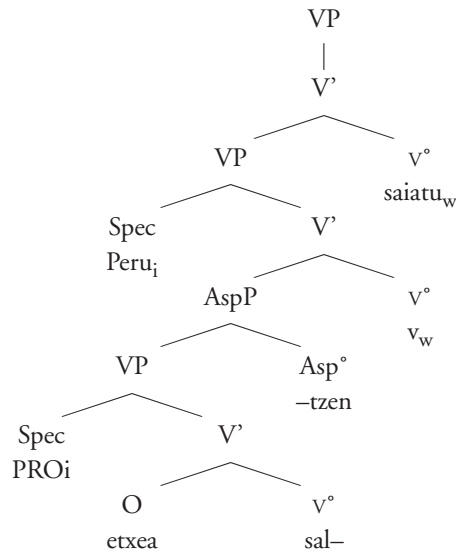
Given this analysis, the account of the distribution of PRO is the same as with unergative control verbs such as *nahi*. If the VP is to be part of a clause, it must obey the predication requirements of the EPP by having one argument which is bound from outside itself. This null-argument (PRO) must be the highest argument projected within VP by the verb, otherwise it would be bound within VP and would not satisfy the EPP.

Thus, if another argument of the lower verb (e.g. the object of a transitive verb) is coreferent with the Agent of the higher verb, the EPP cannot be satisfied simply by the appearance of PRO in object position, since this PRO would have its antecedent within its VP (i.e. the Agent of the lower verb) rather than outside its VP. Instead, a full clause may be projected as complement of the higher V to allow the EPP to be satisfied within the domain projected by the lower V (23).

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[40] In non-finite contexts, the normal Case of the object of a verb in northern dialects is GEN. However, ABS is also acceptable (Oyharçabal, p.c.).

23. Amaia Jonek   ikus z–eza–n   saiatu z–en.
     PN   PN–ERG see   3sA–3sE–SUBJ–PRET–COMP try   3sA–PRET–AUX
     'Amaia tried that Jon should see her'.

4.3. Participial indirect questions

In the previous section I have suggested that the behaviour of PRO in obligatory control structures in Basque can be accounted for without having to make any reference to any discrete subject Case assigned by an AGR category. Rather, I derive the behaviour of PRO from the requirement that the EPP be satisfied. The same analysis carries over to PRO in participial indirect questions. Here, again, there must be one empty position (PRO) in the embedded question, and this PRO is necessarily the subject, regardless of whether it is ERG (as in 24a) or ABS (as in 24b)[41].

24 a. Ni–k$_i$ ez   d–aki–t   [PRO$_i$ zer   egin].
        1s–ERG   NEG   3sA–know–1sE   what?–ABS   do
        'I don't know what to do'.

    b. Ni–k$_i$ ez   d–aki–t   [PRO$_i$ nora   joan].
        1s–ERG   NEG   3sA–know–1sE   whither?   go
        'I don't know where to go'.

    c. *Ni–k   ez   d–aki–t   [nor–k   Iñaki   ikusi].
        1s–ERG   NEG   3sA–know–1sE   who?–ERG   PN   see
        Intended reading: '*I don't know who to see Iñaki'.

    d. *Ni–k   ez   d–aki–t   [nor   etorri].
        1s–ERG   NEG   3sA–know–1sE   who?–ABS   come
        Intended reading: '*I don't know who to come'.

Again, we assume that Case is not involved. Rather, since the highest argument in 24a, b is PRO and is antecedent-governed from outside its domain, the argument structure is unsaturated and the embedded construction obeys the EPP. In 24 c, d, the argument structure is saturated, and the EPP requires externalization of one argument from the embedded argument structure, which in turn requires a finite clause to be projected. As predicted, the configuration of arguments is in itself grammatical, as long as the necessary finite structure is projected (cf 25).

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[41] With verbs which refer to decisions affecting the behaviour of others (such as *agindu* 'to decide, order', *eztabaidatu* 'to discuss') both arguments of the embedded verb can be realized overtly without control, as in the following example: *Alkateari galdetu diogu zeinek txakurra hil* '*We asked the mayor who to kill the dog' (Laka & Uriagereka 1987:399). As far as Case-marking is concerned, this seems to indicate that this type of construction projects I°, although we have no morphological evidence of any functional category being projected in the embedded phrase, not even AspP. Note that the *galdegaia* position is not active in this type of construction, as evident from the fact that the wh–word *zeinek* 'which one ERG' is not adjacent to the verb. Either the adjacency requirement between the galdegaia and the verb is relaxed in this context (as suggested by Laka & Uriagereka) or the *galdegaia* position itself is not present, suggesting a minimal amount of structure. At this stage it is not clear which approach is more satisfactory.

25   a. Ni–k   ez   d–aki–t
          1s–ERG   NEG   3sA–know–1sE
          [nor–k   ikusi   d–u–en   Iñaki].
          who?–ERG   see   3sA–AUX–3sE–COMP   PN
          'I don't know who has seen Iñaki'.

      b. Ni–k   ez   d–aki–t   [nor   etorri d–en].
          1s–ERG   NEG   3sA–know–1sE   who?–ABS   come   sA–AUX.COMP
          'I don't know who has come'.

In this context, where one of the elements is a wh–word, we might expect that the EPP may have been satisfied by wh–movement to whatever A'–position may have been projected from the embedded clause, whether SpecCP or some other level[42]. However, we see here that wh–movement clearly does not satisfy the EPP (we can probably generalize this to A'-movement in general). The EPP can only be satisfied by what is commonly referred to as NP–movement, and any VP must contain either a PRO or an NP–trace, or must itself be nominalized.

4.4. Subject control vs auxiliaries[43]

In section 4.2 it has been suggested that unaccusative control verbs have a double VP structure to allow them to assign two θ–roles without having an Agent which can be realized in ERG Case. However, in section 3.3 the auxiliary *ari* 'PROGRESSIVE' was analysed as having an unaccusative structure which takes a VP as its complement (cf Fig 6 for the structures involved). This difference in analysis clashes with the fact that the Case-marking properties of *saiatu* 'to try' and *ari* are exactly the same (cf 26).

26   a. Peru   etxea   saltzen   ari   da.
          PN   house   sell–IPF   PROG   3sA–AUX
          'Peru is selling his house'.

      b. Peru   etxea   saltzen   saiatu   zen.
          PN   house   sell–IPF   try   3sA–PRET–AUX
   'Peru tried to sell his house'.

[42] I have not actually addressed the question of what this position is. Presumably it is the SpecCP of a non-finite clause. An interesting question would of course be what this non-finite clause otherwise contains. We have no evidence of any levels higher than AspP (i.e. no evidence of any level which may serve as target for NP-movement, i.e. satisfying the EPP).

[43] The distinction implied is, of course, that between control verbs and raising verbs. The reason I do not use the term raising verbs in this context is that the paradoxical fact that raising verbs in Basque are characterized by the subject *not* having raised.

Fig 6.
a) *ari*, unaccusative auxiliary   b) *saiatu*, unaccusative control verb
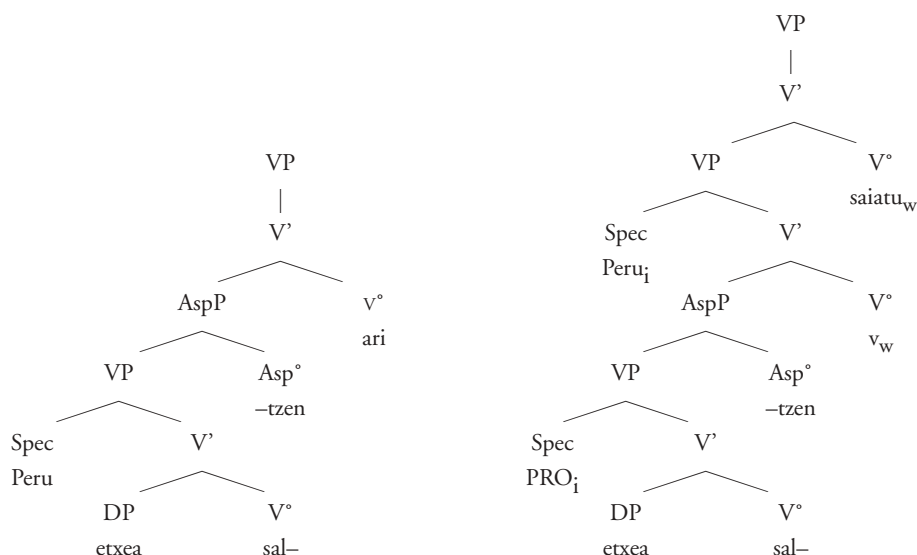
This contrast may seem to be unwarranted from the point of view of the Case-marking system. After all, the simplest analysis would be that *saiatu* occurs in exactly the same structure as *ari*, and that it takes as its complement a VP with an overt Agent rather than an Agent PRO.
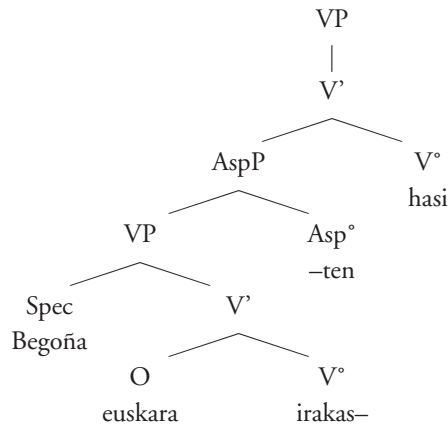
However, the reason for this distinction is one of the semantics of the two types of verb. While *saiatu* arguably θ–marks its subject (the person who tries), *ari* does not – *Peru* in 26a is not the subject of 'progressiveness' in the same sense that *Peru* in 26b is the person who does the trying. For this reason I suggest that the structures involved are not directly comparable[44].

There is another verb behaves similarly to *saiatu* or *ari* as far as the Case-marking properties are concerned, namely *hasi* 'to begin' (27). Here it is unclear which structure is preferable, since 'to begin' is less obviously an auxiliary than the purely aspectual 'progressive'. At the same time, the concept of 'begin' refers more naturally to an action than to an argument, so the most obvious choice, on purely semantic grounds, would be to assume the same structure as for *ari*.

27. Begoña   euskara   irakasten   hasi   zen.
    PN   Basque   teach–IPF   begin   3sA–PRET–AUX
    'Begoña began teaching Basque'.

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[44] Thus, *saiatu* satisfies all the criteria for a control verb, whereas *ari* satsfies all the criteria for a raising verb, other than that its subject does not actually raise. This is a consequence of the Basque case-alignment.

Fig 7.

```
                          VP
                          |
                          V'
                    ┌──────────┐
                  AspP          V°
               ┌──────┐         hasi
              VP       Asp°
          ┌──────┐     –ten
        Spec      V'
       Begoña  ┌──────┐
              O        V°
            euskara  irakas–
```

Finally, it should be noted that while the question of NP–movement has not been addressed as far as the auxiliaries like *ari* or *hasi* are concerned, this does not imply that these structures are exempt from the requirements of the EPP. NP–movement is viewed as taking place after the level illustrated here (which is primarily concerned with argument structure). It is NP–movement which is assumed to bring the arguments into a configuration where they can trigger agreement with the finite verb.

5. ERG AND ERGATIVITY

So far it has been suggested that Basque has the two structural Cases ACC (traditionally called ABS) and ERG, but no NOM. Evidence has also been shown which supports the view that neither of the two Cases is structurally equivalent to NOM. We have also independently motivated the assumption that ERG in Basque is the Case assigned by I° to SpecVP. The purpose of this section is to show that the above definition of ERG, far from being *ad hoc* and language-specific for Basque, can in fact be placed in a much larger context of languages which display ergative characteristics.

5.1. Ergativity and Austronesian

5.1.1. ERG in Austronesian
As is well known, ergativity is far from being a uniform phenomenon. Ergative characteristics have been claimed for a wide variety of languages, with great differences in the case-marking systems or in the syntactic constitutent structure. I shall concentrate here on one of these groups, namely the Philippine-type *subject-focus* languages[45], a sub–group of Austronesian (so–called because of the characteristic voice system, traditionally referred to as *focus*).

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[45] Linguists disagree as to whether this group is genetically a homogeneous subgroup or if it consists of several or parts of several genetic subgroups (of Austronesian). Two things are certain, however: they are all Austronesian and they all form a relatively homogeneous typological group.

These languages comprise all the native languages of the Philippines, Taiwan and Madagascar, as well as some groups in Borneo. I shall use the language Seediq[46] (Atayalic; Austronesian: Taiwan) to exemplify the characteristics relevant to this discussion. The most important features of subject-focus are as follows:

a) subject-focus is multipolar, usually involving four different voices: AF (Actor Focus, corresponding to active voice), PF (Patient Focus, corresponding to a simple passive), LF (Locative Focus, indicating that the subject of the clause is the location where the action takes place) and IF (Instrument Focus, indicating that the subject of the clause is the instrument with which, or the beneficiary for which, the action is performed). Thus PF, LF and IF can be considered to be different types of "passive"[47].

b) there is normally no difference in valency between AF and the three passive voices – specifically, a passive never has a lower valency than its corresponding active. If anything, it may have a higher valency. This is because the Agent of a passive clause may normally not be omitted, while it is possible in some cases to omit the object of an active clause.

The Case of the Agent in a passive clause is formally identical with genitive, but it is often identified with ERG (Starosta 1986[48], Bittner & Hale 1996, Holmer 1996, Chang 1997). The Case of the Object in an active clause is unmarked in some languages (of which Seediq is one). It is traditionally identified with ACC (Bittner & Hale 1996, Holmer 1996, Chang 1997[49]). The Case of the Subject in any type of clause is normally referred to as NOM.

In an AF clause, NOM and ACC are realized (28a). In a PF clause, NOM and ERG are realized (28b). There are also situations where all three cases NOM, ERG and ACC can be realized in the same clause, usually involving IF (28c).

28 a. Mnekan   bunga   Pawan.
        eat–AF–PRET   sweet potato   PN
        'Pawan ate sweet potatoes'.

    b. Puqun   qolic   bunga.
        eat–PF   rat   sweet potato
        'The sweet potatoes will be eaten by rats'.

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[46] This research on Seediq is the result of fieldwork conducted in Taiwan in 1993, 1995 and 1998. For a more detailed descriptive account of Seediq see Holmer 1996.

[47] The term 'passive' is controversial in this respect. I use the term here simply to indicate that a Patient appears in subject position. The mechanism deriving it has nothing to do with the derivation of passives commonly assumed in GB syntax. It can, however, be fruitfully compared with English passives, given a change in the model describing the mechanism used to derive passivization.

[48] In fact, Starosta goes so far as to claim that this group of languages is uniformly ergative. Most other researchers refer to the Austronesian system as a type of mixed system which contains ergative features.

[49] But not Starosta (since his uniform ergative analysis treats actives as *pseudo-transitives* with an oblique object).

  c. Seekan   ido   na   laqi   ka   atak.
      eat–IF   rice   ERG   child   SUBJ   chopsticks
      'The child eats rice with chopsticks'. /
      'The chopsticks are eaten-rice-with by the child'.

The result is that Austronesian has three structural Case possibilities: NOM, ERG and ACC. The structure involved is illustrated in Fig 8[50].

Thus, in an active clause, movement from SpecVP to SpecIP causes an accusative (NOM – ACC) alignment, movement from O to SpecIP causes an ergative (NOM – ERG) alignment, and if an oblique appears in SpecIP (as the case is in IF clauses, cf 28c above), the alignment is simultaneously accusative and ergative. It is this situation which is of particular interest to the present discussion.

Fig 8.
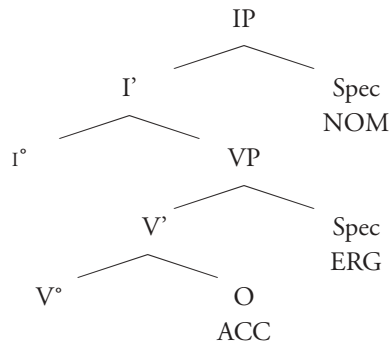
Traditional typological work on ergativity attempts to account for case alignment in terms of one of two structural cases (ERG or ABS) being identified with NOM. The main reason for this is the idea that a language is either ergative or accusative, so ERG and ACC should not be able to coexist.

However, in subject-focus languages, ERG and ACC must be assumed to coexist in the underlying structure (so as to be able to account for the fact that case alignment is dependent on voice). In fact, examples such as 28c show that ERG and ACC can actually coexist in the same clause, provided that subject position is occupied by some other element.

5.1.2. ERG and D°

We recall from section 3.4 the suggestion was made that Basque ERG is assigned to SpecVP under government from I° or D°. This was proposed to account for the fact that the lowest visible category appearing outside AspP in a Basque nominalized phrase is the definite article. It was also mentioned that this ERG alternates with GEN depending on the categorial status of the complement: ERG to SpecVP, GEN to SpecNP.

This suggestion was motivated primarily by language-specific data from Basque. However, as mentioned in section 3.4, Bittner & Hale (1996) also

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[50] Structure as proposed in Holmer 1996. For more details on the grammar of Seediq see Holmer 1996. For alternative analyses of the nature of the Austronesian voice system see Guilfoyle, Hung & Travis 1992, Chang 1997.

comment on a connection between I° and D° – specifically, they suggest that, in some languages (including Inuit and Malagasy), ERG is assigned by both I° and D° (op. cit. 60 - 62). It is therefore interesting to compare the suggestions and see if any cross-linguistic generalizations can be derived from this.

The facts which Bittner & Hale are trying to explain using this proposal are, however, quite different from those in Basque. What Bittner & Hale want the model to explain is the homophony in many languages of ERG and GEN. Therefore, they propose that the case assigned by I° (ERG) and D° (GEN) is, in these languages, structurally the same. Since they are concerned not with the distinction of ERG and GEN, but rather the lack of it, their use of ERG assignation by D° is not directly relevant to Basque.

At the same time, the Basque data, though clearly different, appears to point in the same way as Bittner & Hale suggest, namely that D° can, under certain circumstances (albeit not the same circumstances), assign ERG. Therefore it would be advantageous to try to relate these suggestions.

Bittner & Hale's proposal is that in some languages, I° and D° universally assign ERG, whereas in certain other languages, only I° can assign ERG, while D° assigns a language-specific structural oblique (usually identified with GEN). The proposal I would like to make is that case assignation from D° is subject to the following variation:

1) ERG (for all complements of D°),
2) GEN (for all complements of D°) or
3) ERG or GEN, depending on the category of the complement.

Type 1 is predicted to have total homonymy between ERG and GEN. Type 2 is predicted to have discrete ERG and GEN as separate cases, and moreover to lack ERG subjects in nominalized clauses. Type 3 is what I propose for Basque.

5.2. Consequences for Burzio's Generalization

In section 2.1 we noted that the analysis of the assignation of Basque ABS, and the uniform identification of Basque ABS with ACC, directly contradicts Burzio's Generalization (henceforth BG: it states, briefly summarized, that a verb's assignation of object Case to its object is directly connected with its capacity to θ–mark an external argument, i.e. the Agent). We also noted that the data in Basque still seems to indicate that such an interpretation is the most straightforward one[51]. It is therefore in the interests of this discussion to examine the validity and relevance of BG as a cross-linguistic statement. To pursue this line, the first point is to look at the motivation underlying BG.

One of the primary functions of BG is to account for the fact that passivization in languages such as English or Italian involves two parallel processes: a) the demotion of the Agent and b) the prevention of accusative Case marking of the Patient. Since these two processes are not related in any ob-

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[51] Recall that Ortiz de Urbina decided against this interpretation in deference to Burzio's generalization (op. cit. p. 52-56).

vious way, a principle is required to connect them: this is BG. However, BG does not actually explain anything, it merely expresses a set of facts which have been noticed for some languages (of which Basque is not one[52]). If we instead can find an alternative way of accounting for the facts described by BG, we are free to ignore BG if the data calls for it.

In Holmer 1996 and subsequent work it was argued that the received GB account of passivization is incapable of straightforwardly accounting for the data in Seediq and possibly Western Austronesian languages in general. For reasons of space I shall only briefly summarize the relevant arguments here[53]:

a) in a clause with an auxiliary verb (including adverbs of manner, which, in Seediq, are syntactically verbs), only the auxiliary is marked for passive, the main (non-finite) verb remains in active form. Thus, the Case-marking properties of the main verb do not change between actives and passives.

b) in a passive, the Patient still moves to subject position. It follows from a) that this movement cannot be for Case reasons (its function is actually primarily related to definiteness).

c) subject position (SpecIP) can be used as a landing site for elements which cannot be realized elsewhere (as is the case with oblique subjects in Instrument Focus). It follows that SpecIP is a Case-position.

d) as a result of b) and c), movement in Seediq passivization takes place from one Case-marked position (O) to another (SpecIP).

It follows that the whole idea that movement takes place primarily for Case reasons and that Chains may only have one Case-marked element must be revised. This is the main tenet of the Subject Choice model (Holmer 1996, 1997), namely that passivization is simply an alternative subject choice (choosing the Patient instead of the Agent to be subject). The verbal morphology called 'passive' is generated as a kind of agreement in a functional head (I° or a subsection of INFL) to recover the original syntactic function of the subject. Movement from one Case position to another results in the deletion of the d-structure Case and its replacement by the s-structure Case.

For reasons of space, I shall not argue this point further here. Relevant evidence is presented in the works referred to. Instead, I shall concentrate on the further consequences of the above model.

Assuming, then, that movement from O to SpecIP causes the deletion of ACC (being replaced by NOM), it follows that: a) ACC is not realized in a passive clause and b) the Agent is stranded in what is a Case-less position in

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[52] Western Austronesian languages in general also fall outside BG, since, as is pointed out by Guilfoyle, Hung & Travis 1992 (pp 408-409), a passive verb still θ-marks its Agent (which is normally not omitted) although it fails to Case-mark its object.

[53] The reader is referred for further details and evidence to Holmer 1996, (especially section 5.5, pp 131-145).

English (SpecVP) and is either deleted or realized as an oblique (in a by-phrase). Passive is a morphological hint altering the listener that a change in the argument structure has taken place. Conversely, moving from SpecVP to SpecIP leaves the Agent with NOM, while the Patient still has ACC.

This is exactly what BG describes. Using the Subject Choice model, we can account for pasivization in an entirely uniform fashion in different types of languages. Assuming that SpecIP can not be left empty (or without a referent) ensures that the single argument of an unaccusative verb may not remain in O position and may thus not be realized in ACC Case: it must move to SpecIP and thus its Case must be deleted.

Thus, using the Subject Choice model, the facts described by BG can be accounted for straightforwardly (and with much more explanatory power) without actually using the formulation of BG itself. It follows that BG need not be assumed to have any cross-linguistic validity other than that actually evident from data in the languages for which it holds, and that it need not be taken into into account in the analysis of languages which do not share these features.

Instead, it is more relevant to use the general principles of the Subject Choice model to attempt to explain why certain languages are counterexamples to BG, and in what way such languages differ from pure accusative languages or from one another. This is the purpose of the following section.

5.3. Ergativity in Basque and Austronesian

We mentioned earlier that Western Austronesian subject-focus languages are sometimes described as being ergative. One obvious reason for this is that they make use of a Case form which is best described as ERG. We have, however, also noted that ergativity in subject focus languages only appears in passive voices (PF, LF, IF). In active voice (AF) the alignment of the clause is accusative. Actually, in IF the alignment is mixed, containing both ERG and ACC.

This follows straightforwardly from the Subject Choice model: movement from SpecVP to SpecIP (i.e. in AF) deletes ERG and replaces it with NOM, leading to an accusative alignment (NOM - ACC). Movement from O to SpecIP (PF) deletes ACC, leading to an ergative alignment (NOM - ERG). Movement from an oblique position (IF) to SpecIP deletes neither ERG nor ACC, so the alignment is mixed (NOM, ERG, ACC).

How does Basque behave with respect to Subject Choice? Let us examine the analysis proposed in section 3 (i.e. that ACC is assigned by $v°$ and ERG is assigned by $I°$) and see what the predictions of the Subject Choice model are with respect to this proposal.

Firstly, it was proposed that Basque has no NOM Case. This is a unprecedented situation for the Subject Choice model. It implies that while movement must take place for agreement, movement has no consequences as far as Case is concerned. A Patient remains in ACC and an Agent remains in ERG. This is of course one of the most salient features of morphological ergativity: there is no subject Case which is inherently connected with the highest argument position in the clause – briefly, Case reflects base-generation.

Secondly, the agreement positions are directly connected to Case: thus an ERG argument forces ERG agreement on the verb and an ABS/ACC argu-

ment forces ABS/ACC agreement on the verb. It follows that true diathetic changes can not occur, since there is no one position which is obligatorily filled and which is open to either Agents or Patients. This prediction is corroborated by the facts: Basque has no voice alternations of the type which change the case of involved arguments. The only passive-like constructions are such where the Agent is demoted (which has no Case consequences for the Patient).

Thirdly, since neither ACC and ERG require finiteness to be assigned, it follows that either can appear without being reflected in verb morphology: for ACC arguments, this happens when an unaccusative verb like *ari* 'to be doing' is serving as an auxiliary (cf 5b, 5c in section 3.1). ERG arguments can appear as subjects in nominalized verb phrases and as *by*–phrases of passives (cf 6 a – c, section 3.2).

Therefore, assuming that the positions relevant for Case assignation are the same, irrespective of which language we are dealing with (i.e. NOM in SpecIP, ERG in SpecVP and ACC in O) we can present a typology of language based on parameters of Case assignment. For example, we see that Basque and Seediq differ in exactly one parameter: the existence of NOM. The fact that Seediq has NOM allows Case-changing diathetic changes to take place, whereas this does not occur in Basque.

At the same time Basque and Seediq share the feature that Agents are assigned ERG. In Basque this Case remains on the Agent, in Seediq it is only realized if Subject position is filled by something else (i.e. a Patient or an Oblique, which then receives NOM). In English, on the other hand, ERG is not assigned, so diathetic changes (which do occur, since NOM is assigned) affect transitivity. The typological parameters can be summarized in table form (Fig 9).

Type a) in Fig. 9 is a split-ergative type of language which allows variation between an accusative and an ergative pattern. Type b) corresponds to a uniform morphologically ergative language which furthermore has no diathetic changes. Type c) corresponds to an accusative language like English. Finally, type d) corresponds to a syntactically ergative language such as Dyirbal (cf Dixon 1994 for a discussion on syntactic ergativity).

Fig 9.

TYPE	Case-marking in positions:			Example language
	SpecIP	SpecVP	O	
a	+	+	+	Seediq
b	–	+	+	Basque
c	+	–	+	English
d	+	+	–	Dyirbal

At this stage it is unclear whether or not there are any languages of types where two of the positions mentioned above lack Case. A possible candidate might be Maori, where the only argument which is morphologically unmarked is the subject – non-subject Agents and Patients alike are preceded by what might be considered to be a preposition. However, it is difficult to distinguish prepositions from Case-markers, so, as far as we can see at the

moment, the four types in Fig 9 illustrate what appear to be the major parameters of typological variation in Case-marking alignment. Further variation is likely to derive from other aspects of the structure rather than from the Case-marking system in itself[54].

Fig 9 is of course an approximation in one important respect: what is parameterized is not whether or not a certain structural position may be assigned Case, but rather whether or not a certain category is a potential Case-assigner. Thus, where O is assigned Case, the Case-assigner is v°, and where SpecVP is assigned Case, the Case-assigner is I° (both of these types of Case-assignation taking place under government). As far as NOM Case-marking in SpecIP is concerned, accounts vary, and I do not address the question of whether NOM is assigned in Spec-Head agreement with T° (or another head within a split-INFL model) or under government from C°. This is a purely theoretical question as far as Basque is concerned. The assignation of ERG and ABS, on the other hand, is crucially important to our analysis of Basque. Thus, the parameters in Fig 9 can be expressed as in Fig 10.

Further research will be required to isolate further parameters which can serve to make finer distinctions between languages. The thesis of the present work is that Basque exemplifies one of four possible types of language as far as Case-assignation is concerned, different from Seediq, Dyirbal or English, and yet sharing features with each.

Fig 10.

<div align="center">Potential Case assigners</div>

TYPE	(SpecIP)	I°	v°	Example language
a	+	+	+	Seediq
b	−	+	+	Basque
c	+	−	+	English
d	+	+	−	Dyirbal

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the present paper I have presented data from Basque which indicates that neither ERG nor ABS in Basque is structurally equivalent to NOM in an accusative language, but rather that ABS should be identified structurally with ACC and ERG with a cross-linguistically identifiable ERG.

It is furthermore argued that the one phenomenon in Basque which makes reference to a discrete notion of subject, namely control, can be resolved without invoking Case requirements, simply by deriving control from the Extended Projection Principle. Thus it is shown that Case requirements are not a necessary mechanism in the analysis of Basque syntax.

Finally, it is shown that Basque fills a gap in a model of typological variation of Case-marking, and that the claims which we have made about Bas-

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[54] This is actually a well-motivated statement. Unless we consider language types where more than one position of the three indicated lacks Case, or unless we introduce further positions which may be Case-marked (possibilities which cannot be excluded a priori, but for which we have no evidence at the moment), Fig 10 actually covers the logically possible variation.

[34]

que syntax are directly comparable to the Subject Choice analysis of Autronesian syntax, as exemplified by the Formosan language Seediq (cf Holmer 1996).

Thus, assuming a Subject Choice model for the analysis of Case-marking and voice shows Basque in an entirely new light. It displays Basque ergativity not as a complex system involving phenomena such as covert incorporation (cf Laka 1993a, Bobaljik 1993), nor as a system where covert agreement morphology is required for Case assignation (cf Ortiz de Urbina 1989:175ff), nor yet as a system where either ABS or ERG is prevented from being assigned in a non-finite control structure, the choice being dependent on the argument structure of the verb.

Instead, it displays Basque ergativity as a relatively simple system, where both ERG and ABS are assigned uniformly under government by I°/D° and V° respectively, where agreement is only needed in the analysis when it is overtly realized, and where an accusative control pattern can be achieved without resorting to Case requirements, simply by extending the domain of the EPP, a principle which is independently motivated cross-linguistically.

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LABURPENA

Euskararen datuek agertzera ematen dute, nominatiboari buruz diferentzia garrantzitsuak dituztela NOR eta NORK kasu biek, aurreko lanek aski azaldu ez dutena. Ez bata eta ez bestea ez dira "nominatibo kasua" sujeto hutsa bezala ager daitezkeenak. Ez eta NORK kasuan ere, adibide honetan ikusten denez: *Gerrak Euskal Herrian eragindako lehen biktima...* zeinetan NORK hitzak, "gerragatik" aditzondoaren zentzua dauka. Horregatik diot euskararen bi kasuak akusatiboari eta ergatiboari dagozkiela, alegia, NOR akusatiboa, eta NORK ergatiboa.

Ez da hori hain laburgarri ez baitago gero nominatiboari dagokion kasurik. Beste hizkuntzekilako konparaketak bestalde, adibidez *seediq* Taiwanen eta beste austronera hizkuntza batzuek, azaltzen dute honelako laburtze beharrik ez dagoela. Austronera hizkuntzetan, nominatibo, akusatibo eta ergatibo hi-

ru kasuak elkarrekin dabiltza. Horrek garbi frogatzen du, beraz, akusatiboa eta ergatiboa elkarren ondoan egon daitezkeela.

RESUMEN

Los datos del euskera señalan que los dos casos vascos, NOR y NORK, tienen importantes diferencias con respecto al caso nominativo, que los trabajos anteriores no han explicado suficientemente. Ninguno de ellos es "un caso de sujeto" con el significado que solamente puede aparecer como sujeto: ni el caso NORK, como se ve en este ejemplo, *Gerrak Euskal Herrian eragindako lehen biktima...* donde el sustantivo en caso NORK tiene la función del adverbial "por la guerra". Por eso digo que los dos casos del euskera corresponden a acusativo y ergativo. Es decir: NOR, acusativo; NORK, ergativo. Esto no es tan económico, porque no hay ningún caso que corresponda a nominativo. Pero la comparación con otras lenguas, por ej., *seediq* en Taiwan y otros idiomas austroneses demuestra que este tipo de economía no es necesario. En los idiomas austroneses coexisten los tres casos, nominativo, ergativo y acusativo, así que hay evidencia de que acusativo y ergativo pueden coexistir.

RESUMÉ

Les travaux antérieurs sur la syntaxe du basque ont tenté de comparer les cas NOR et NORK avec un "cas sujet" structurellement équivalent au nominatif. Cependant, l'étude du langage tend à indiquer que ni NOR ni NORK ne sont équivalents au nominatif, parce-que ni l'un ni l'autre ne correspondent à la fonction sujet (le cas NORK avec un passif peut avoir la fonction d'une phrase adverbielle). Pour cette raison, je propose que NOR soit identifié avec le cas accusatif, et NORK avec le cas ergatif. Le fait de permettre la coexistence de l'accusatif et de l'ergatif n'est pas un phénomène unique au basque: il existe également dans le langage austronésien *seediq*, parlé a Taiwan. Par conséquent, l'analyse proposée du basque n'est pas nécessairement problématique au niveau économique, mais ne fait qu'utiliser des concepts issus de l'analyse d'autres langages.

ABSTRACT

Previous generative work on Basque syntax has attempted to equate either the NOR or the NORK case in Basque with a "subject case" corresponding structurally to nominative. However, data in Basque indicates that neither NOR nor NORK should be identified with nominative, since neither is necessarily identified as a subject, e.g. an NP in NORK case may correspond to an adverbial 'by-phrase' rather than a subject. Therefore it is suggested that NOR should be identified with a cross-linguistically identifiable accusative and NORK with a cross-linguistically identifiable ergative case. It is further shown that Basque is not unique in allowing the coexistence of accusative and ergative - in certain Austronesian languages such as *Seediq* spoken in Taiwan, nominative, accusative and ergative can be shown to exist. Therefore the proposed analysis of Basque is not unnecessarily uneconomical, but rather draws advantages from options forced by data in other languages.