

The Microparameter in Basque Participial Periphrases

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Several apparently unconnected properties of participial periphrastic constructions in Basque systematically distinguish central and eastern varieties. Those properties can be summarized as follows: (i) eastern varieties possess optional dative agreement (1); (ii) only eastern varieties allow *wh*- and focal operators to immediately precede the auxiliary; central varieties always have the lexical verb in between the auxiliary and the focus/*wh*-phrase (2,a,b); (iii) eastern varieties naturally allow, but central ones don't, orders of the type *modal+participial complement* (3). The participial complement can in those cases be richer in structure than in the orders *participial complement+modal*, universally available in Basque (see Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria, 2009); (iv) only eastern varieties allow orders in which the participial complement and the auxiliary are separated by something else, typically an additive marker of the *even/also* sort, or evidential adverbs (4); (v) only central dialects accept dummy *egin* "do" (Haddican, 2007) in verb-focus constructions (5); (vi) only eastern varieties have distinct non-finite transitive and intransitive auxiliaries, unlike central ones, in which only a general purpose one exists (*izan* "be/have") (6); (vii) Eastern dialects allow for post-auxiliary, participle internal negation (not an instance of constituent negation, see Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria, 2009) (7). Finally, Eastern dialects require simple unergative verbs to combine with *be*, instead of *have*, unlike in central/western dialects (8). Outside the domain of periphrastic constructions proper, only eastern varieties have participial relatives (9). I will claim that those differences can be reduced to a single morphosyntactic parameter, consisting in the fact that eastern copulas must be "synthetic verbs" (De Rijk, 2008) not auxiliaries, the latter being the only option in central dialects. Synthetic verbs are finite verbs which, unlike auxiliaries, possess a lexical root. The class of synthetic verbs in Basque is composed of a handful of very common verbs, including the equivalents of the romance locative copulas (cf. Spanish *estar*). In eastern dialects, this class would include the transitive and intransitive copulas. As a first step in the argument, let me note that the immediate adjacency of focus/*wh*-phrase and finite forms is generally possible in Basque in the case of synthetic verbs (10), and in identificational predications (11), for which it has been claimed that the copula may be a contentful verb (Zaring, 1996, on Welsh). It is also well known that synthetic verbs do not accept dummy *do* in Basque. The reason is simple: synthetic verbs are characterized by the fact that the verbal root raises to T; and as shown by Haddican (2007) dummy *do* is inserted as a way to save stray aspectual morphology, when the lexical verb cannot raise to Aspect and beyond. If eastern auxiliaries are synthetic verbs we easily explain this otherwise intriguing lexical gap in the Basque dialectal continuum. This hypothesis complies well with the fact that only eastern dialects have distinct lexical forms for intransitive (*izan*) and transitive (*ukan*) non-finite auxiliaries. We can capitalize on the lexical status of eastern copulas to account for the rest of the distinguishing properties of those varieties: on the one hand, lexical copulas do not trigger ordinary predicate fronting (Haddican, 2004), the syntactic process whereby verbal predicates in Basque periphrases raise to a higher polarity phrase immediately preceding the auxiliary in unmarked affirmative sentences, yielding the rigid order OVAux. Other things, such as focus particles or evidential adverbs, may intervene (see 4). Then, the lexical status of the copula in eastern varieties also has an effect in the type of complement it can take: lexical verbs, unlike auxiliaries, can take complements of different complexity (Wurmbrandt, 2004). Those complements will be able to host at least some clausal functional structure, such as negation, and allow for

wh-operator movement, which accounts for the existence of participial relatives. Pairs such as (2a,b), nevertheless, available in all dialects, raise the following question: if auxiliaries in eastern varieties are synthetic verbs, why do they seem to optionally allow predicate fronting? The existence of participial relatives provides us with a clue for a parsimonious analysis of this alternation: the structure of the eastern interrogative/focal cases resembling western configurations is actually the output of clausal pied-piping (12a), an independently attested phenomenon in Basque. The optionality is thus related to the syntactic complexity of the participial: if it contains a C-layer, it allows pied-piping; if it doesn't, the wh-p./focus directly raises to the higher clause (12b). The same option can also account for apparent optional dative agreement: the presence of C, a Phase, will block Agree from the auxiliary probe; its absence potentially allows Agree to apply. The auxiliary alternation in (8a,b), on the other hand, is reminiscent of Laka's (2006) discussion of ergative splits in the context of progressive periphrases (biclausal constructions). I will argue that Eastern participials project a case licensing head F. F licenses one of the arguments of a transitive verb, typically the object. In the case of transitive predicates, this will force the subject to raise outside the participial clause, ending up in a local relation with the higher T (see Rezac et al., 2014 for T as the locus for ergative case/agreement). An exception arises in the context of unergatives if incorporation of the bare noun (*dantza*) to V allows it to dispense with case (Baker, 1988). In that case, the case feature in the participial is available for the second argument (the subject), which does not raise and surfaces as absolutive (13a,b). Concentrating on perfect periphrases, I show that the microparameter distinguishing E and C varieties can be viewed as the transition point in a diachronic process whereby biclausal periphrases became monoclausal in Basque (Mounole, 2011). This process was accomplished in western/central areas, but did not fully affect eastern varieties.

- (1) Liburu bat eman dut/dakot gizon horri (E/*C) [**E=Eastern ; C=Central**]
 Book one-abs given aux(tr)/(dirt) man that-dat
 "I gave a book to that man"
- (2) a. Nor/XABIER etorri da (E/C) b. Nor/XABIER da etorri (?) (E/*C)
 who/Xabier come is who/Xabier is come
 "Who came?/XABIER came"
- (3) Behar du garaiz etorri (E/*C) (4) Errabia batek hartu ere/bezala du (E/*C)
 must aux on-time come rage one-erg taken also/like has
 "She must come on time" "She has also/apparently been overcome by rage"
- (5) Erori egin da (C/*E) (6) Erosi nahi ukhan du (E/*C)
 Fall done is buy-partc want had has
 "She FELL" "He wanted to buy it"
- (7) JON da [ez etorri] (E/*C) (8) a. Dantzatu du (C/*E)
 Jon is not come danced has
 "It is JON who did not come" "He/she danced"
- (9) Jonek erosi liburua (E/*C) b. Dantzatu da (E/*C)
 Jon-erg bought book-D danced is
 "The book that Jon bought" "He/she danced"

