

Case marking and aspectual relations of Basque verbal noun complements

Silvie Strauß

Leipzig University

JeNOM 10, Nantes, 6.6.2023

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Basque verbal nouns
 - Structure
 - Functions
- 3 Patterns of case marking in complementation
 - General pattern
 - One CEP, two different cases
- 4 Conclusion

Introduction

Clausal complementation:

- a clause-embedding predicate (CEP) takes a complement clause (CC) as its argument
→ interplay between verbal properties on the inside and nominal properties on the outside (cf. Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1993; Borsley/Kornfilt 2000; Baker 2011)
- correlation between semantics of the CEP and the morphosyntactic form the CC (Givón 1990 Chapter 13; Wurmbrandt/Lohninger 2023, among others)

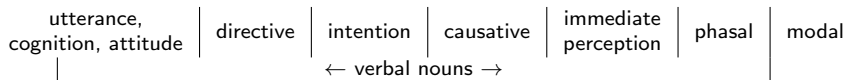
Structure

- Verb stem + $-t(z)e$
- Internal morphosyntax (marking of dependents, word order) verbal, but external morphosyntax nominal
→ take case endings like nouns, but restricted to singular (= "definite") and transnumeral (= determinerless)

'doing'	SG	TRN
Absolutive	egite- a -Ø do.NMLZ-DET.SG-ABS	
Ergative	egite- a -k	
Inessive	egite- a -n	egite-n
Purposive	egite-ko	

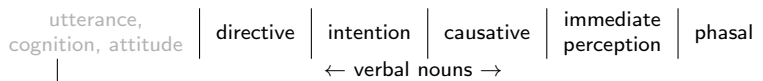
Functions

- Event nominalisations
- Used as adverbial and complement clauses
- Most productive strategy for complement clauses, covering almost the whole spectrum of CEP classes:



Functions

- My focus: constructions with predetermined temporal relation between matrix and embedded event



→ typically ABS, INE or PUR marking

Patterns of case marking in complementation

Case marking of VNs across different classes of CEPs:

Phasal, immediate perception, direct causation and procedural knowledge verbs (e.g. *hasi* 'begin', *ikusi* 'see', *utzi* 'let', *jakin* 'know' = embedded event simultaneous with matrix event, imperfective): INE

Directive verbs, verbs of intention (e.g. *agindu* 'order', *mehatxatu* 'threaten' = embedded event (potentially) realised after matrix event): PUR or ABS

Implicative (e.g. *ahaztu* 'forget', *lortu* 'manage' = embedded event perfective and before/simultaneous with matrix event): ABS

→ case marking correlates with a certain aspectual relation between the embedded and the matrix event

Patterns of case marking in complementation

→ case marking correlates with a certain aspectual relation between the embedded and the matrix event:

- ① perfectivity: singular = perfective, transnumeral = imperfective
→ parallel to count vs. mass nouns in 12th century Basque (Martínez Areta 2009: 76) and in locational cases in modern Basque
- ② temporal ordering: inessive = simultaneous, purposive = prospective, absolute = neutral
→ parallel to aspect markers:
imperfective participle = inessive transnumeral VN
prospective participle = perfective participle + -ko

One CEP, two different cases

Interesting alternations: ABS~INE and PUR~INE

→ closer look at two verbs each

Data from ETC (Egungo Testuen Corpusa (Corpus of Contemporary Texts)):

- 355,4 million tokens from 2001-2019
- mostly newspaper articles, some fiction and non-fiction books, no oral discourse

One CEP, two different cases

Distribution of the two complement types can be very uneven:

- *ahaztu* 'forget': ABS:INE ca. 3:1
- *tematu* 'insist': PUR:INE ca. 1:10
- *lagundu* 'help': PUR:INE ca. 1:50
- *irakatsi* 'teach': ABS:INE ca. 1:400

→ one default type, other one use to yield some change in interpretation

1. opposition: ABS vs. INE

ahaztu 'forget' (proportion ABS:INE ca. 3:1)

(1) a. Inessive

<i>eta jokalaria-ei,</i>	<i>[futbol-ea-n</i>	<i>joka-tze-n]</i>	ahaz-tu
and player-PL.DAT	football-SG-INE	play-NMLZ-INE	forget-PFV
<i>zai-e-la</i>		<i>dirudi-Ø</i>	
3SG.ABS.AUX.ITR2-3PL.DAT-COMP		seem-3SG.ERG	

'And as for the players, it seems as if they have forgotten how to play football.'
(ETC: Egunkaria, 2000-12-23)

b. Absolutive

<i>[ni-re</i>	<i>izen-a-Ø</i>	<i>esa-te-a-Ø]</i>	ahaz-tu
1SG-GEN	name-SG-ABS	say-NMLZ-SG-ABS	forget-PFV
<i>zai-t</i>			
3SG.ABS.AUX.ITR2-1SG.DAT			

'I forgot to say my name.' (ETC: *Egun denak ez dira berdin*, Xabier Etxeberria)

→ procedural vs. deontic \approx subparts vs. whole action = perfectivity

1. opposition: ABS vs. INE

irakatsi 'teach' (proportion ABS:INE ca. 1:400)

- (2) a. Inessive
[irakur-tze-n eta idaz-te-n] irakas-ten d-i-e-te
 read-NMLZ-INE and write-NMLZ-INE teach-IPFV PRS-AUX.DITR-3PL.DAT-3PL.ERG

'They teach them how to read and write.' (ETC: Berria, 2017-07-16)

- b. Absolutive
[peoi-ak sakrifika-tze-a-Ø eta errege-a-Ø gauza guzti-Ø-en
 pawn-PL.ABS sacrifice-NMLZ-SG-ABS and king-SG-ABS thing all-PL-GEN
gain-etik defenda-tze-a-Ø] irakas-ten d-u-Ø-en
 above-ABL defend-NMLZ-SG-ABS teach-IPFV 3SG.ABS-AUX.TR-3SG.ERG-SUB
joko zoro hori
 game crazy DEM.MED.ABS

'that crazy game that teaches to sacrifice the pawns and to defend the king above everything' (ETC: Jakin aldizkaria, 226 zbk.)

2. opposition: PUR vs. INE

tematu 'insist, persist' (proportion PUR:INE ca. 1:10)

(3) a. Inessive

(*iritsi beharko du urrats horrek*),

batzu-ek [uka-tze-n eta atzera-tze-n] tema-tu arren

some-ABS deny-NMLZ-INE and delay-NMLZ-INE persist-INF although

'(This step will have to arrive,) although some persist in denying and delaying it.'
(ETC: Berria, 2012-02-28)

b. Purposive

[aukera politiko jakin bat-Ø Eusko legebiltzarr-etik kanpo
option political certain INDF-ABS Basque parliament-ABL outside

uz-te-ko] tema-tu zen PP-Ø (alderdi sozialistaren
leave-NMLZ-PUR persist-PFV AUX.ITR.3SG.PST PP-ABS

laguntzarekin lortu arte)

'The PP persisted in their efforts to exclude a certain political option from the Basque parliament, (until they succeeded with the help of the socialist party.)'
(ETC: Berria, 2012-05-12)

→ temporal overlap vs. succession/goal

2. opposition: PUR vs. INE

INE imperfective?

- PUR complements generally telic, INE complements more often atelic
- But: INE also with punctual events (→ no imperfective reading):

(4) (*hura iskanbila etxe hartan sortu zena*)

Carolina ohoragarri-a-Ø [no-rekin eta Ablewhite jaun bilau-a-rekin [...]
 Carolina honourable-SG-ABS who-COM and Ablewhite mister common-SG-COM
 ezkon-tze-n] tema-tu ze-n-ea-n
 marry-NMLZ-INE persist-PFV AUX. ITR.3SG.PST-SUB-SG-INE

'(There was terrible work in the family) when the Honourable Caroline insisted on marrying plain Mr. Ablewhite.' (ETC: *Ilargi-harria*, Wilkie Collins (Antton Olano))

→ difference to PUR: realised, not a mere goal

2. opposition: PUR vs. INE

INE:

a) [\ggggg] tematu

—————→

[\ggggg] 'delay'

b) [\gg] tematu

—————→

[\bullet] 'marry'

PUR:

[\ggggg] tematu

—————→

[\bullet] 'exclude'

2. opposition: PUR vs. INE

lagundu 'help' (proportion PUR:INE ca. 1:50)

- (5) a. Inessive
amona-a-ri *[erosketa-ak* *egi-te-n]* **lagun-du**
 grandma-SG-DAT shopping-PL.ABS do-NMLZ-INE help-PFV
z-i-o-Ø-n
 PST-AUX.DITR-3SG.DAT-3SG.ERG-PST

'S/he helped his/her grandma do the shopping.' (ETC: Berria, 2012-01-03)

- b. Purposive (inessive also possible)
piano-a-Ø *jo-tze-n* *jaki-te-a-k* *[organo-a-rekin*
 piano-SG-ABS play-NMLZ-INE know-NMLZ-SG-ERG organ-SG-COM
has-te-ko] **lagun-du** *z-i-zu-Ø-n?*
 start-NMLZ-PUR help-PFV PRS-AUX.DITR-2SG.DAT-3SG.ERG-PST

'Did knowing how to play the piano help you to start with the organ?' (ETC: Goienkaria, 2012-05-18)

→ INE default, PUR can be used to highlight goal?

Conclusion

- Case marking pattern of Basque VN complements can be explained by aspectual relation to CEP → VNs make use of nominal morphology to express event properties
- Verbal categories expressed outside of nominalisation?
→ different from "real" TAM marking by verbal means, marks TAM relation between embedded and matrix event rather than TAM value of the embedded event itself

Conclusion

- Combinations of same CEP with different VNs possible, some combinations very infrequent → coercion of an aspectual relation that is not canonically part of the meaning of the CEP, but expected from the meaning of the CC
- Concrete semantic contribution can still be different depending on the CEP → interaction of CEP and CC meaning → supports the "synthesis model" of Wurmbrandt/Lohninger 2023: complements are not syntactically selected but have to match certain semantic requirements of the CEP and in turn contribute to the meaning of the CEP/ the whole construction
- Further research: different syntactic properties of VNs in different cases

References

- Artiagoitia, Xabier(2003): "Complementation." In Hualde, J. I. / Ortiz de Urbina, J. (eds.): *A Grammar of Basque*. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter Mouton. 640-718.
- Baker, Mark C (2011): "Degrees of nominalization: Clause-like constituents in Sakha." *Lingua* 121: 1164-1193.
- Borsley, Robert D. / Kornfilt, Jaklin (2000): "Mixed Extended Projections." In: Borsley, Robert D. (ed.): *The Nature and Function of Syntactic Categories*. San Diego/London: Academic Press. 101-131.
- *Egungo Testuen Corpua* (= ETC) [Corpus of contemporary texts] (2021): <https://www.ehu.eus/etc/>.
- Givón, Talmy (1990): *Syntax: A functional-typological introduction*. Vol. II. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Koptjevskaja-Tamm, Maria (1993): *Nominalizations*. London: Routledge.
- Martínez Areta, Mikel (2009): "The category of number in Basque: I. Synchronic and historical aspects." *Fontes Linguae Vasconum*, 110: 63-98.
- Wurmbrandt, Susanne / Lohninger, Magdalena (2023): "An implicational universal in complementation – theoretical insights and empirical progress." In Hartmann, Jutta M. / Wöllstein, Angelika (eds.): *Propositional Arguments in Cross-Linguistic Research: Theoretical and Empirical Issues*. Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto. 183-229.