# Paradigmatic redundancy in the complement system of Basque

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# Outline

1. The Basque language
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# The Basque language

- Isolate, spoken by 750.000 speakers on both sides of the Western Pyrenees
- Increasingly intense contact with Romance languages for more than 2000 years, but still typologically very different (agglutinative, head-final, ergative ~ semantic alignment)
- First texts from 16$^{th}$ century

# Complement systems

- Languages typically have 2-4 types of complement clauses (Noonan 2007), 2 on average (Schmidtke-Bode 2014)
- Division of labour according to iconic and economic factors → morphosyntax of CC matches semantics of complement relation (Givón 1990; Cristofaro 2003; Wurmbrand/Lohninger 2023)
    - → E.g. independence of TAM or arguments

# The Basque complement system

- 3 (finite vs. nominalised vs. participial) to 17 types
- According to syntactic properties:
  1. Indicative (= all moods used in declarative main clauses)
  2. Subjunctive
  3. Verbal noun in structural case
  4. Purposive verbal noun, participial interrogative
  5. Allative/ inessive verbal noun
  6. Perfective participle

→ rather large inventory

# The Basque complement system

- No strict division of labour, but large overlap between finite and non-finite types:

| utterance, cognition, attitude | factive | directive, causative | intention | implicative | immediate perception | phasal | modal |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| IND | | SUBJV | | | | | |
| | VN ABS/ERG/DAT/INS | VN PUR, Q + PTCPL | VN ABS/DAT/INS | | VN INE | | PTCPL PFV |

# The Basque complement system

(1)

a) Indicative CC

*[osasun zerbitzu-ak      eta     sendagai-ak     **uka-tzen   dizk-i-e-te-la**]*
health    service-ABS.PL   and    medicine-ABS.PL  deny-IPFV    3PL.ABS-AUX.DITR-3PL.DAT-3PL.ERG-COMP

*<u>sala-tu</u>           z-u-Ø-en*
denounce-PFV     3SG.ABS-AUX.TR-3SG.ERG-PST

'S/he denounced that they deny them healthcare and medicine.' (ETC: Berria, 2004-08-31)

b) Verbal noun CC

*[zuzendari-a-k     mediku   txosten-a-Ø        aintzat         ez      **har-tze-a-Ø**]*
director-SG-ERG     doctor    report-SG-ABS      into_account    NEG     take-NMLZ-SG-ABS

*<u>sala-tu</u>           d-u-te                       senide-e-k*
denounce-PFV     3SG.ABS-AUX.TR-3PL.ERG    relative-PL-ERG

'His/her relatives denounced that the director doesn't take into account the medical report.'
(ETC: Berria, 2004-02-06)

# The Basque complement system

(2)

  a) Subjunctive CC

*Jacob-ek*   *[zaldi-Ø-en*   *ondo-a-n*   **etzan**     **zedi-n]**        <u>*aholka-tu*</u>

Jacob-ERG   horse-PL-GEN   side-SG-INE  lie_down    AUX.ITR.SBJV.PST.3SG-SUB   advise-PFV

*z-i-o-Ø-n*                     *Clara-ri*

3SG.ABS-AUX.DITR-3SG.DAT-3SG.ERG-PST   Clara-DAT

'Jacob advised Clara to lie down next to the horses.' (ETC: *Reckless - Harrizko haragia*, Cornelia Funke (Aiora Jaka))

  b) Verbal noun CC

*batzorde* *bat-ek*   *[2011-n*   *erreferendum-a-Ø*  **egi-te-a-Ø]**     <u>*aholka-tu*</u>

committee  INDF-ERG  2011-INE   referendum-SG-ABS    do-NMLZ-SG-ABS  advise-PFV

*d-i-o-Ø*                   *gobernu-a-ri*

3SG.ABS-AUX.DITR-3SG.DAT-3SG.ERG   government-SG-DAT

'A committee has advised the government to organise a referendum in 2011.' (ETC: Berria, 2009-11-21)

# The Basque complement system

- Paradigmatic economy (Haiman 1985): only as many forms as needed → large overlap not economic, indicative of ongoing changes
→ Language contact?
  - OV languages typically preverbal complement clauses, preverbal CCs typically non-finite (Schmidtke-Bode/Diessel 2017)
  - Finite CCs with indicative vs. subjunctive distinction widely used in Romance, non-finite CCs much more restricted
  →spread of finite CCs?

# Properties and origins

**Morphosyntactic properties:**

◉ Finite

- indicative: TAM and 3 arguments (like independent clauses)
- subjunctive: no aspect, fixed mood, copied tense and 3 arguments

(3) Indicative

*[eman-Ø    d-i-zki-o-zu-la]*                           *espero d-u-t*

give-**PFV**     **3.ABS.PRS-**AUX.DITR-**PL.ABS-3SG.DAT-2SG.ERG**-COMP    hope    3SG.ABS-AUX.TR-1SG.ERG

'I hope that you have given them to him/her.'

(4) Subjunctive

*[eman  z-i-eza-zki-o-zu-la]*            *agin-du    n-Ø-i-zu-n*

give     **3.ABS.PST**-DITR-AUX.SUBJV.TR-    order-PFV    1SG.ERG-3SG.ABS-AUX.DITR-2SG.DAT-PST

            **PL.ABS-3SG.DAT-2SG.ERG**-COMP

'I ordered you to give them to him/her.'

# Properties and origins

**Morphosyntactic properties**:
- Verbal nouns
  - Structural cases: aspect (perfective vs. imperfective), no tense, no mood, no indexing, but no restrictions on arguments
  - Other non-finite clauses: no verbal categories, no overt subject

(5) Absolutive verbal noun

*[(zu-k　har-i　　hai-ek)　　eman-Ø　izan-a-Ø] espero　d-u-t*

2SG-ERG DIST.SG-DAT　DIST.PL-ABS　give-**PFV**　　be-SG-ABS　hope　　3SG.ABS-AUX.TR-1SG.ERG

'I hope that you have given them to him/her.'

(6) Purposive verbal noun

*[(har-i　　hai-ek)　　ema-te-ko]　agin-du　n-Ø-i-zu-n*

DIST.SG-DAT　DIST.PL-ABS　give-NMLZ-PUR order-PFV　1SG.ERG-3SG.ABS-AUX.DITR-2SG.DAT-PST

'I ordered you to give them to him/her.'

# Properties and origins

**Situation at the beginning of the writing tradition:**

- Finite clauses with the same complementizers -*(e)n* and -*(e)la* as today
- Emerging subjunctive: specialisation of forms with auxiliaries *\*edin/ \*ezan/ egin* after being replaced by new constructions in other contexts (Mounole 2014)
- Verbal nouns formed the same and inflected in the same cases
- Distribution:
  - In subjunctive contexts finite clauses more frequent (Mounole 2014: 81)
  - Utterance/cognition/attitude verbs generally finite CC (sample of 10 verbs in EKC)

# Properties and origins

**Origins:**

- Finite CCs:
  - Complementizer *-(e)n* general subordinator, probably originally linking suffix (Azkarate/Altuna 2001: 225)
  - Complementizer *-(e)la* modal origin (cf. e.g. *nola* 'how', *hone-la* DEM.PROX-MOD 'so (prox.)'), probably via quotative pathway (cf. Güldemann 2008: 317-228)
  - No dialectal variation → rather old
- Verbal nouns:
  - Suffixes *-te, -tze, (-keta)* < derivational suffixes expressing duration, abundance, activity (Trask 1995: 221-222)
  - Newest of non-finite verbal forms:
    - built on other forms (Biscayan *sar-tu-te* enter-PFV-NMLZ)
    - dialectal variation
    - still nominal traces in marking of dependent P and (earlier) S

# Sketching the developments

- Verbal nouns probably newer than finite CCs
- Use more restricted in oldest texts
  - → Apparently spread of verbal nouns to contexts occupied by finite CCs
  - → More advanced in subjunctive than in indicative contexts: use of verbal nouns in subjunctive contexts already by beginning of writing tradition, spread of verbal nouns to indicative contexts only later and still not complete

$16^{th}$-$17^{th}$ century:

| utterance, cognition, attitude | factive | directive, causative |
|---|---|---|
| IND | | SUBJV |
| | VN | |

$21^{st}$ century:

| utterance, cognition, attitude | factive | directive, causative |
|---|---|---|
| IND | | SUBJV |
| | VN | |

# Sketching the developments

**Motivations:**

- More economic in contexts where TAM and arguments are predetermined (≈ subjunctive contexts) → explains earlier/ more advanced spread in subjunctive contexts
- Loss of more complex verb forms general trend:
  - Also with imperative and potential (the other two moods using the same auxiliaries *edin/ *ezan/ egin* as the subjunctive)
  - Diminishing class of verbs allowing synthetic conjugation
- But: indicative forms still exist in main clauses and non-finite forms are a disadvantage in contexts where nothing is predetermined (≈ indicative contexts) → why also spread to indicative contexts?

# Sketching the developments

**Spread of verbal nouns to indicative contexts: why and how?**

- Also economy: verbs with fixed or expectable time (e.g. *aurreikusi* 'predict', *gogoratu* 'remember') or subject reference (e.g. *aitortu* 'confess, admit', *leporatu* 'accuse')?
- Analogy with nominal objects?
- Extension from factive contexts?
  → distinction between content-of-utterance and content-of-theme not always clear-cut

# Conclusion

- Present-day redundancy due to spread of verbal nouns to contexts occupied by finite CCs
→ detailed diachronic study needed to trace exact developments
- Replacement of subjunctive by non-finite CCs economic motivations
- Replacement of indicative CCs needs different explanation, possibly multiple factors
→ more careful study of verbs allowing verbal noun CCs
- Correlation between increase in usage and acquisition of more clausal properties?

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# Appendix

**Verb sample studied in EKC (16$^{th}$ and 17$^{th}$ century texts)**
Occurrences with CC in at least 3 different authors:
- *aitortu* 'confess, admit': only finite
- *frogatu* 'prove; try': only finite
- *salatu* 'report, denounce': only finite
- *ukatu* 'deny': only finite
- *ohartu* 'notice; remember': only finite
- *oroitu* 'remember': only finite
- *estimatu* 'estimate, think': only finite
- *damu izan* 'regret': only non-finite

Occurrences with CC in only one author:
- *gogoratu* 'remember': only finite (Axular)
- *ahantzi* 'forget': only finite (Pouvreau)