Verb Morphology and Clause Structure in Basque: Allocutive

After the works Jelinek 1984, Baker 1996, the idea that in languages with polypersonal verbs arguments are introduced by agreement whereas overt DPs instantiate topics, became close to trivial (see, however, Elordieta 2002 on Basque). But a bunch of crucial questions remain unanswered. In our paper we will concentrate on the following problem:

If a polypersonal clause may be normally instantiated by a verbal form, (1), where does the border between the "argumental" (IP/vP) and "peripherial" (CP) parts of the clause lie?

We try to answer this question based on the analysis of the Basque allocutive marker (BAM). The term 'allocutive' refers to the verb agreeing with the addressee which doesn't belong to the set of arguments of the verb in question. BAM is a suffix (-k/-a- for masculine, -n/-na- for feminine addressee) attached to the (auxilliary) verb after the dative agreement suffix and before the ergative (putting aside the Ergative Displacement, see f. ex. Fernández & Albizu 2000) and past tense suffixes (if any), see (1). As (1) shows, BAM differs w.r.t. gender, that is not relevant in almost all other domains of the Basque grammar.

Instantiating quite a unique typological phenomenon, BAM, however, received a little attention in theoretical literature, see Oyharçabal 1993, Eguren 2000. Oyharçabal 1993 that presents the most elaborated study of BAM, states that BAM is not allowed in (some types of) subordinate clauses, see (2). As it is also argued in Oyharçabal 1993, BAM becomes ungrammatical with the overt realization of the speech addressee. In fact, not only BAM admits the overt expression of the speech addressee, but this marker becomes obligatory when such an addressee is present:

The main problems concerning BAM are:

(i) What's the interpretation of BAM? (ii) Why BAM demands the specification of gender which is not attested elsewhere in Basque? (iii) Does it correspond to any overt DP? (iv) What properties are responsible for the restrictions on the use of BAM in dependent clauses?

We propose the analysis of BAM exploring Rizzi's 1997 idea of split CP. As was supposed by Rizzi, the CP can be viewed as consisting of the some layers, see (4).

We propose that:

(i) BAM marks a specific speech register, occupies the Force head position and so marks the register / type of the clause, it is followed by the tense morpheme which we treat as some CP-level functional head (see Guéron & Hoekstra 1992, Pesetsky & Torrego 2001); (ii) BAM markedness for gender is due to its exclusive status in the register of dialog (it is also supported by the fact that the only other domain of the Basque grammar where gender agreement is operative, is the interjection *aizak/aizan* 'hey you'); (iii) BAM in ForceP introduces the 2nd person topic, that can be realized overtly (switching the mood/register may result in the change of the number of participants, see Platzack & Rosengren 1998); (iv) The restriction on the use of BAM in sentential complements and some other dependent clauses is due to the fact that the Force features can not be expressed independently in such CPs and are copied from that of the matrix CP.

Problems of the proposed analysis. If we treat BAM as a topic on a pair with other participants introduced by verbal inflectional markers, we expect that it shares the properties of them, that is not always true. Thus, for instance, the allocutive can not bind an anaphor (5). Why is it so, if the BAM-related topic is merged definitely higher than the addressee-DP in (5)? The answer is that they are merged at different phases, CP and vP respectively. But, as it was stated in Arimoto & Murasugi 2005 among others, binding is sensitive to phase.

Thus, our paper proceeds the study of the contribution of morphology to the syntactic structure of Basque, see Laka 1993. As we show in (6), the CP-IP border lies inside the verb. So our analysis extends the idea that verbal inflections in a polysenthetic language are functional heads, introducing pro or overt topics, on the (split) CP level. In what follows we are going to present a more elaborated study of the allocutive phenomenon in Basque.

(1)   n-ekar-zki-o-a-n   /   n-ekar-zki-o-na-n
       1SG.E-bring-PLZ.A-3SG.D-ALLOC.M-PST   1SG.E-bring-PLZ.A-3SG.D-ALLOC.F-PST
       I brought them to him (Euskaltzaindia 1995:38)

(2)   Lo egiten   d-u-en / *d-i-na-n   gizona Manex d-u-n
       sleeping   3.A-AUX-3.E.REL/3.A-AUX-ALLOC.F-3.E.REL man   John   3.A-AUX-ALLOC.F
       The man who is sleeping is John (Oyharçabal 1993:107)

(3)   Hirekin   etorri *n-aiz /   n-au-k
       you.FAM.COMIT   come   1SG.A-AUX   1SG.A-AUX-ALLOC.M
       I came with you (fam.) (Alberdi 1995: 277)

(4)   [ForceP [TopP* [FocP [TopP* [FinP]]]]]

(5)   *e_{ALLOi} pro_k Hire   buruarekin$_i$ mintzatzen   n-au-k
                                  you.FAM.GEN   head.COMIT   speaking   1SG.A-AUX-ALLOC.M
       I am speaking with yourself (Oyharchabal 1993: 103)

(6)=(1)   [$_{CP}$ [$_{IP}$ n-ekar-zki-o $_{IP}$]   -a $_{ForceP}$]   -n $_{CP}$]
               1SG.E-bring-PLZ.A-3SG.D   -ALLOC.M   -PST

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