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## Unaccusative Verbs in Basque

Beth Levin

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Basque is the only European language said to have an ergative system of case marking and verb/auxiliary agreement. But this traditional description of Basque turns out to be inappropriate since the "intransitive" verb class in Basque includes only those intransitive verbs whose argument is a d-structure object, i.e. the unaccusative verbs.<sup>1</sup> The recognition of the existence of an unaccusative class necessitates a re-examination of the system of case (and agreement). In particular, Basque will turn out to be unusual in having a system of morphological case that reflects d(eep)-structure grammatical relations rather than s(urface)-structure grammatical relations as accusative case systems do. Furthermore, the notion of s-structure subject is still required in Basque to account for control phenomena. An account of the Basque case system within the Government-Binding framework (Chomsky 1981) that allows for these properties will be proposed.

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1. In referring to this class of verbs, I will use Perlmutter's term "unaccusative" (Perlmutter 1978) rather than Burzio's term "ergative" (Burzio 1981) for clarity. Also I will use the term "unergative" to refer to the second class of intransitive verbs that Perlmutter identifies, the class of intransitive verbs with a d-structure subject, rather than Burzio's term "intransitive". The term "intransitive" will be used to refer to verbs with a single argument that is the s-structure subject, a class encompassing both the unaccusative and unergative class.

To begin, I will review the reasons that Basque has traditionally been considered a language with an ergative system of case marking and verb/auxiliary agreement, simultaneously introducing some facts about Basque simple sentence syntax. Basque simple tensed sentences usually consist of a verb in a participial form and an inflected auxiliary<sup>2</sup> together with the noun phrases bearing argument relations to the verb. Word order is relatively free in Basque simple sentences, although there is a fixed focus position, the preverbal position.<sup>3</sup> Basque has a wide range of nominal cases but no prepositions or postpositions. Three cases only will be of interest: the NOR case, the NORK case, and the ZERIK case. I will refer to the cases by their Basque names to avoid preconceptions concerning their functions.

Basque verbs are usually divided into two major classes according to the cases of the arguments they select; these are the NOR class and the NOR-NORK class.<sup>4</sup> The NOR verbs, which require a single argument marked for the NOR case, have been called intransitive, while the NOR-NORK verbs, which take two arguments, one in the NOR case and one in the NORK case, are considered to be transitive verbs. The members of the NOR-NORK and NOR verb classes have counterparts among the transitive and intransitive classes, respectively, in other languages.

An ergative system of case marking is one in which the object (or patient) of a transitive verb and the single argument of an intransitive verb share the same case, the absolutive case, while the subject (or agent) of a transitive verb shows a different case, the ergative case. Furthermore, in an ergative system of case marking, the absolutive case is typically the morphologically unmarked case and the ergative case is the morphologically marked case. This system contrasts with an accusative system of case marking where the subject of a transitive verb and the single argument of an intransitive verb share the same case, the nominative case, while the object of a transitive verb receives a distinct case, the accusative case.

The system of case marking in Basque conforms to the ergative pattern. Consider sentence (1) with the verb *etorri* "to come".<sup>5</sup>

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2. All verbs in Basque can appear in one of three participial forms together with an auxiliary inflected for person and number. Only a small number of Basque verbs can be inflected directly without the use of the auxiliary. The verbs that can be inflected directly show the same pattern of agreement as the auxiliaries, so they will not be discussed further.

3. This aspect of Basque syntax is not relevant to this paper, but see Azkarate et al. (1981) for some discussion.

4. I will be ignoring the NORI (dative) case, although verbs do select this case, treating the NOR-NORI and NOR-NORI-NORK verbs as subclasses of NOR and NOR-NORK verbs, respectively.

5. The citation form for Basque verbs is the perfect participle form. In the examples, verbs are in the perfect participle form, auxiliaries in the present form, proper nouns in the indefinite form, and other noun phrases in the definite form, unless otherwise specified in the gloss. The examples are from Euskara Batua (Unified Basque).

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- (1) Ni etorri naiz.  
I-NOR come 1sNOR-IZAN  
I came.

The single argument to the verb in (1) is in the NOR case, the morphologically unmarked case in Basque. Compare sentence (1) to sentence (2) with the NOR-NORK verb *ikusi* "to see".

- (2) Mirenek ni ikusi nau.  
Miren-NORK I-NOR see 1sNOR-UKAN-3sNORK  
Miren saw me.

In (2), the NOR noun phrase corresponds to the "object" of the English counterpart of the sentence while the "subject" is in a distinct, morphologically marked, case, referred to as the NORK case. Sentence (3) contrasts with (2) in having the first person singular pronoun in the NORK case form, *nik*.

- (3) Nik liburua ikusi dut  
I-NORK book-NOR see 3sNOR-UKAN-1sNORK  
I saw the book.

But in sentence (3), the pronoun corresponds to the "subject" of the English counterpart. Given the pattern illustrated in (1)-(3), Basque is considered to have an ergative system of case marking. Accordingly, the NOR case is traditionally termed the "absolutive" case and the NORK case the "ergative" case.

All verbs in Basque can occur in a participial form together with an auxiliary which takes person and number marking, as illustrated in the examples above, (1)-(3). There are two auxiliaries in Basque, the auxiliaries IZAN "to be" and UKAN "to have". A NOR verb selects the auxiliary IZAN "to be" which always shows agreement with a NOR noun phrase, as in (1). A NOR-NORK verb selects the auxiliary UKAN "to have" which agrees with both the NOR and NORK arguments to the verb, as in (2)-(3). NOR verbs cannot take the auxiliary UKAN, although NOR-NORK verbs can take the auxiliary IZAN in the impersonal construction (see below). Therefore, the ability of a verb to take the auxiliary UKAN indicates that the verb is not a NOR verb.

The system of agreement in Basque is also described as ergative.<sup>6</sup> There is a set of prefixal agreement markers that are construed with the NOR noun phrase of both NOR and NOR-NORK verbs and a second distinct set of suffixes that are construed with the NORK noun phrases of NOR-NORK verbs. Consider (1)-(3) again. In (1), the verb shows the prefix *n-* indicating agreement with a first person singular NOR noun phrase. In (2), the auxiliary again shows the prefix *n-*, in agreement with a first person singular NOR noun phrase. The agreement marker for a first person singular NORK noun phrase is the suffix *-t*, as in (3). In what follows, I will focus on

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6. Basque also shows agreement with the NORI (dative) case, but this will not be discussed here. The auxiliaries have a separate position for dative agreement, so it is independent of the agreement with NOR and NORK noun phrases discussed here.

case marking since the agreement system reflects the same pattern.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the apparent surface system of ergative case marking, Basque does not appear to differ radically from an accusative language such as English in its syntax.<sup>8</sup> In particular, I will assume that the NOR-NORK verbs are in fact transitive verbs with the NORK noun phrase as d-structure subject (d-subject) and the NOR noun phrase as d-structure object (d-object). The question that will be addressed next is the nature of the NOR verbs in Basque, the so-called "intransitive" verbs.

I will argue that the NOR verbs in Basque are unaccusative verbs. That is, a NOR verb meets Burzio's (1981) definition of an unaccusative verb as a verb that does not assign a thematic role to its subject (a property that will be referred to by Burzio's feature [-T]). This characterization of unaccusative verbs implies that the NOR noun phrase, as an argument to a NOR verb, must be assigned its thematic role by virtue of being the d-structure object of the verb. There are two types of evidence that the NOR verbs are unaccusative verbs: syntactic evidence that the NOR noun phrase is a d-object, and semantic evidence from a consideration of the members and non-members of the NOR class.

Syntactic evidence that the NOR verbs are unaccusative verbs comes from the existence of properties shared by the NOR noun phrase of both NOR verbs and NOR-NORK verbs, properties which do not hold of NORK noun phrases, and which furthermore are properties independently associated with d-objects in other languages. One property concerns the distribution of the ZERIK (partitive) case while a second concerns regularities in thematic role assignment in the anti-causative alternation and the impersonal construction.

The first piece of syntactic evidence for considering NOR verbs unaccusative comes from the distribution of the ZERIK (partitive) case. Nominals in the ZERIK case are found primarily in negative sentences.<sup>9</sup> The use of ZERIK is illustrated in (4) and (5).

- (4) Ez du gizonak ikusi ikaslea.  
 NEG 3sNOR-UKAN-3sNORK man-NORK see student-NOR  
 The man didn't see a/the student.

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7. The NOR-NORK verbs show a deviation from the ergative system in the past with third person NOR noun phrase where the agreement markers construed with the NORK noun phrase resemble those typically used with a NOR noun phrase.

8. It is possible to show that Basque is an accusative language in the sense of Marantz's Ergativity Hypothesis, for example, via Marantz's passive/reflexive ambiguity test (Marantz 1981). See B. Levin (in prep.) for evidence that Basque is an accusative language in this sense.

9. The ZERIK case is found as well in certain exclamatory, conditional, interrogative, and existential sentences. See deRijk (1972) for an extensive discussion of the use of the ZERIK case, and Salaburu (1981) for a brief survey.

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- (5) Ez du gizonak ikusi ikaslerik.  
 NEG 3sNOR-UKAN-3sNORK man-NORK see student-ZERIK  
 The man didn't see any students/a (single) student.

Sentence (4) illustrates sentential negation in Basque, which is indicated by the presence of the negative particle EZ preceding the auxiliary.<sup>10</sup> Sentence (5) illustrates the use of the ZERIK case. This sentence is the counterpart of (4) with the NOR noun phrase "replaced" by a noun phrase in the ZERIK case. The noun phrase in the ZERIK case is interpreted as bearing the same thematic role to the verb in (5) as the noun phrase in the NOR case bears to the verb in (4). The sentence with ZERIK differs slightly in meaning from (4). It no longer expresses only simple sentential negation; instead, a quantifier-variable interpretation is associated with the ZERIK noun phrase.

Basque grammars note that the distribution of the ZERIK case parallels that of the NOR case (deRijk 1972, Goenaga 1980, Lafitte 1979, Salaburu 1981). Thus, the NOR-NORK sentence (4) has the counterpart (5) with a noun phrase in the ZERIK case interpreted as receiving the same thematic role as the noun phrase in the NOR case. But, a sentence with a NOR-NORK verb in which the noun phrase in the ZERIK case is interpreted as receiving the same thematic role as a NORK noun phrase is not possible. There is no sentence such as (6) corresponding to (4).

- (6) \* Ez du gizonik ikusi liburua.  
 NEG 3sNOR-UKAN-3sNORK man-ZERIK see book-NOR  
 Not a man saw the book.

The NOR noun phrase of a NOR verb may also be "replaced" by a ZERIK noun phrase. Compare (7) and (8), both with the NOR verb *etorri* "to come".

- (7) Ez da gizona etorri.  
 NEG 3sNOR-IZAN man-NOR come  
 A/the man didn't come.
- (8) Ez da gizonik etorri.  
 NEG 3sNOR-IZAN man-ZERIK come  
 No men came.

The NOR noun phrase in (7) and the ZERIK noun phrase in (8) both bear the same thematic role. The difference between the sentences parallels that between (4)-(5). Once again there is a change from simple sentential negation in (7) to a quantifier-variable interpretation associated with the ZERIK noun phrase in (8).

Noun phrases marked for any case other than the NOR case cannot be replaced by the ZERIK case. Sentence (9) with the NOR verb *fidatu* "to trust" which also selects a noun phrase in the ZEREZ (instrumental) case does not have a

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10. In negative sentences, the auxiliary appears in pre-focus position, rather than directly following the participle as in affirmative sentences. The focus position always precedes the participle.

counterpart where the ZEREZ noun phrase is replaced by a ZERIK noun phrase bearing the same thematic role.

- (9) Ni ez naiz gizonaz fidatu.  
I-NOR NEG 1sNOR-IZAN man-ZEREZ trust  
I didn't trust the man.
- (10) \* Ni ez naiz gizonik fidatu.  
I-NOR NEG 1sNOR-IZAN man-ZERIK trust  
I didn't trust a/any man.

The distribution of the ZERIK case coincides with that of the NOR case. The distribution could be accounted for by assuming that all NOR noun phrases share this property by virtue of having the same grammatical relation, and arguing that the ZERIK case may be assigned only to noun phrases bearing this grammatical relation, and not some other grammatical relation. In particular, I will argue that this relation must be the d-object relation on the basis of independent evidence from the genitive of negation in Russian.

The ZERIK case appears to have a function analogous to that of the genitive of negation in Russian, which also associates a quantifier-variable interpretation with a noun phrase in a negative sentence. Both Pesetsky (1982) and Neidle (1982) have observed that the genitive of negation in Russian is associated with d-objects, including d-objects of unaccusative verbs, but not with d-subjects.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, Pesetsky argues that within the Government-Binding framework the distribution of the genitive of negation must necessarily be limited to noun phrases in the verb phrase, including the d-object. Therefore, this phenomenon provides a test for identifying the d-object. The similarity in function of the ZERIK case and genitive of negation suggests that the same restrictions would be expected to apply to the distribution of the ZERIK case. If so, its distribution would identify the NOR noun phrases as d-objects in Basque. In particular, the NOR noun phrase of a NOR verb would be a d-object and be assigned its thematic role by the verb. If the NOR noun phrase is a d-object, the NOR verbs then would not be able to assign a thematic role to their subject. In particular, the NOR verbs would be [-T] verbs, that is unaccusative verbs.

Further syntactic evidence for considering at least some NOR verbs unaccusative concerns regularities in thematic role assignment in both the anti-causative alternation and the impersonal construction. The anti-causative alternation in Basque is found with the same type of verbs as in other languages: verbs of change of state and position as well as verbs of emotional reaction. Verbs participating in the anti-causative alternation in Basque select both the NOR-NORK and NOR case arrays. The NOR-NORK array is used to express the causative alternant, as in (11), while the NOR array is used to express the anti-causative alternant, as in (12).

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11. A number of languages besides Russian show a phenomenon that is termed the genitive of negation; these include French and Finnish. In each, language the distribution shows the pattern described for Russian.

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- (11) Mirenek atea ireki du.  
Miren-NORK door-NOR open 3sNOR-UKAN-3sNORK  
Miren opened the door.
- (12) Atea ireki da.  
door-NOR open 3sNOR-IZAN  
The door opened.

The noun phrase in the NOR case is assigned the same thematic role in both sentence (11) and (12). This shared thematic role assignment can be accounted for by assuming that the NOR noun phrase in both sentences has the same d-structure grammatical relation, d-object, and, therefore, receives the same thematic role assignment from the verb in each. The difference between the two alternants can be attributed to whether or not a thematic role is assigned by the verb to its subject. In the causative alternant the verb clearly assigns a thematic role to its subject. But in the anti-causative alternant the verb cannot assign a thematic role to the subject since it has only one thematic role to assign and it is assigned to the d-object. Therefore, the verb is [-T] in the anti-causative alternant which requires the NOR array.

A similar analysis will account for the relation between a NOR-NORK verb and its impersonal counterpart. Any NOR-NORK verb can be used impersonally. Sentence (13) illustrates the "personal" use of the NOR-NORK verb *egin* "to do/make," and sentence (14) illustrates the impersonal use of the same verb.

- (13) Gizonak etxea egiten du.  
man-NORK house-NOR make-PRES 3sNOR-UKAN-3sNORK  
The man is building the house.
- (14) Etxea egiten da.  
house-NOR make-PRES 3sNOR-IZAN  
The house is being built.

In the impersonal use, the verb takes a NOR array with the NOR noun phrase of the impersonal use receiving the same thematic role as the NOR noun phrase of the NOR-NORK use. The NORK noun phrase cannot be expressed in the impersonal use.

- (15) \* Nik etxea egiten da.  
I-NORK house-NOR make-PRES 3sNOR-IZAN  
The house is being built by me.

The relation of the impersonal use to the "personal" use is parallel to the relation between the alternants in the anti-causative alternation.<sup>12</sup> The similarities in thematic role assignment to the NOR noun phrases in (13)-(14) can again be captured by assuming that the NOR noun phrases are d-objects in both uses. But, in the impersonal construction the verb loses its ability to assign a thematic role to its

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12. The reason for recognizing an anti-causative and an impersonal construction in Basque is semantic. Some sentences are open to either an impersonal or an anti-causative interpretation. Furthermore, only impersonal sentences, and not anti-causative sentences, may be modified by "in order to" clauses.



subject; that is, it acquires the feature [-T]. This will result in verbs in the impersonal construction, which involves the NOR array, being associated with the feature [-T].

In contrast to the anti-causative alternation, the verb in both alternants in the indefinite object deletion alternation require the feature [+T].<sup>13</sup> Therefore, given that the NOR array is associated with the feature [-T], the indefinite object deletion alternation in Basque should not involve an alternation between a NOR-NORK array and a NOR array. In fact, it does not, as illustrated by the pair of sentences (16)-(17).

- (16) Jonek sagarra jaten du.  
Jon-NORK apple-NOR eat 3sNOR-UKAN-3sNORK  
Jon ate an apple.
- (17) Jonek jaten du.  
Jon-NORK eat 3sNOR-UKAN-3sNORK  
Jon ate./Jon ate it.

The sentences appear to involve an alternation between the NOR-NORK array and a NORK array.<sup>14</sup> The noun phrase in the NORK case is consistently assigned the same thematic role in both sentences, while the noun phrase in the NOR case is assigned a distinct thematic role, suggesting that the NORK noun phrases have a d-structure grammatical relation distinct from that of the NOR noun phrase.<sup>15</sup>

The expression of the indefinite object deletion alternation in Basque seems to be associated with a special rule of interpretation. Verbs participating in this alternation do not force the definite interpretation usually associated with a non-overt NOR argument when the auxiliary is in the form used with third person singular NOR arguments, as shown by the ambiguity of (17). Verbs which do not participate in this alternation only allow a definite interpretation of a non-overt NOR argument as in (18).

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13. See Marantz (1981) for an analysis of this alternation.

14. The existence of a NORK array in Basque is controversial. Very few verbs in Basque require only this array. Lafitte (1979) gives a small list of such verbs, while Salaburu's grammar (1981) does not mention this array. The question is whether the verbs with the NORK array are actually NOR-NORK verbs. This analysis is suggested by the auxiliary agreement facts. The NORK array requires the auxiliary UKAN "to have", the auxiliary which shows agreement with both NOR and NORK arguments. With the NORK array, the auxiliary must be in the form found when it is construed with a third person singular NOR argument. It is possible that this form of the auxiliary actually has no agreement marker, and that the apparent agreement marker in these forms is actually a tense marker. On this analysis, Basque would allow the NORK array, although it is very limited.

15. Further evidence that the NORK noun phrase of a NORK verb differs in d-structure grammatical relation from the NOR noun phrase of a NOR verb would be provided by ZERIK distribution. The NORK noun phrase of a NORK verb should not be able to be "replaced" by a ZERIK noun phrase with the same thematic role. This appears to be so, but I have very little data on verbs exclusively taking the NORK array.

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- (18) Nik hartu dut.  
I-ERG take 3sNOR-UKAN-1sNORK  
I took it./\*I took.

The second type of evidence for considering the NOR verbs to be unaccusative verbs is semantic. The members of the NOR class in Basque meet Perlmutter's semantic characterization of unaccusative verbs. Perlmutter (1978) notes that there are certain distinct semantic generalizations associated with each of the two subclasses of intransitive verbs he identifies, the unaccusative and the unergative classes, even if a precise semantic characterization of either class is impossible.<sup>16</sup> Unaccusative verbs are generally predicates whose argument bears the patient or theme thematic role, that is predicates describing states and changes of state and position. In contrast, unergative verbs are typically predicates describing activities with their argument assigned the agent role. The examples of NOR verbs, divided into semantically defined classes, below show that the NOR verbs fit Perlmutter's characterization of unaccusative verbs.

Verbs of Motion: *joan* "to go", *etorri* "to come", *ibili* "to walk", *itzuli* "to return", *atera* "to exit", *irten* "to exit", ...  
 Verbs of Change of State or Position: *ireki* "to open", *apurtu* "to break", *bero* "to heat", *erre* "to burn", *hil* "to die", *hertsi* "to close", ...  
 Verbs of Emotional Reaction: *harritu* "to be surprised", *izutu* "to be frightened", *nahasi* "to be confused", *haserretu* "to be angry", ...  
 Verbs of Existence and Occurrence: *gertatu* "to happen", *egon* "to stay/be", *agertu* "to appear", *sortu* "to arise", ...  
 Aspectual Verbs: *amaitu* "to end", *hasi* "to begin", *bukatu* "to end", ...

The verb classes omitted from this list are equally revealing. All verbs that do not meet Perlmutter's semantic characterization of unaccusative verbs cannot be NOR verbs and must be expressed in some other way. Since it is impossible to examine all members of the NOR verb class exhaustively, additional confirmation that the NOR verbs do indeed meet this characterization can be derived either (1) from examining classes of non-NOR verbs to show they include typically unergative verbs or (2) from examining classes of verbs that are typically unergative verbs and showing they are not expressed as NOR verbs. Instances of both should be found in Basque if the NOR verbs are the unaccusative verbs.

First, I will examine a construction which I will refer to as the N EGIN construction, showing that it is used to express the Basque counterparts of a number of unergative verbs. In the N EGIN construction, the NOR-NORK verb *egin* "to do/make" together with an indefinite NOR noun phrase expresses a predicate which takes a NORK noun phrase as "subject", as in (19).

- (19) Nik lan egin dut.  
I-NORK work-INDEF/NOR make 3sNOR-UKAN-1sNORK  
I worked.

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16. See Rosen (1982) for a discussion of this issue.

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In (19), the noun "work" is in the indefinite form *lan* rather than the definite form *lana*. Nouns in Basque have both a definite (determined) and indefinite (undetermined) form. Usually noun phrases occur in the definite form, so the use of the indefinite form of the NOR nominal sets the N EGIN construction apart. In contrast, in sentence (20), a typical use of the verb *egin* "to do/make", the NOR noun phrase is in the definite form *etxea* rather than the indefinite form *etxe*.

- (20) Nik etxea egin dut.  
 I-NORK house-NOR make 3sNOR-UKAN-1sNORK  
 I made a house.

The meaning of an instance of the N EGIN construction is determined by the NOR noun phrase. A wide range of nominals in Basque combine in this way with the verb *egin*, among them:

<u>Negin</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Verb</u>	<u>Negin</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Verb</u>
<i>barre egin</i>	laugh	to laugh	<i>keinu egin</i>	wink	to wink
<i>dantza egin</i>	dance	to dance	<i>lan egin</i>	work	to work
<i>dehadar egin</i>	shout	to shout	<i>lo egin</i>	sleep	to sleep
<i>eztul egin</i>	cough	to cough	<i>negar egin</i>	tear	to cry
<i>hitz egin</i>	word	to speak	<i>zurrunga egin</i>	snore	to snore
<i>irrintzi egin</i>	neigh	to neigh	<i>zuztu egin</i>	whistle	to whistle

The English counterparts of the predicates expressed by N EGIN construction are primarily expressed by intransitive verbs. The examples given include predicates frequently found among the intransitive verbs of other languages: *work*, *sleep*, *speak*, *laugh*, *cry*. These predicates are typically members of the unergative verb class when expressed as intransitive verbs. Basque, then, uses the N EGIN construction to express a number of predicates typically expressed as unergative verbs in other languages through the use of a NOR-NORK verb and a nominal.

Verbs of communication are a class of verbs that are rarely included in the unaccusative class. Languages vary as to whether these verbs are expressed as transitives or intransitives, but if not transitive, they will be among the unergative intransitive verbs. These verbs in Basque would be expected not to be NOR verbs, and indeed are not, consistent with the generalization about NOR class membership.<sup>17</sup> Some verbs of communication are expressed with the N EGIN construction:

*hitz egin* "to speak", *oihu egin* "to shout", *dehadar egin* "to shout",  
*zin egin* "to swear", *galde egin* "to ask"

Others are expressed by morphologically simple verbs, for example:

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17. I know of only one counter-example to the generalization concerning NOR class membership: the verb *mintzatu* "to talk, converse". This verb appears to be an exception since other verbs of communication are not NOR verbs.

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*esan* "to say", *galde* "to ask", *erantzun* "to answer", *aipatu* "to mention", *erausi* "to murmur/chatter"

The selection of the auxiliary UKAN "to have" by verbs of communication indicates that these verbs are not NOR verbs since NOR verbs only select the auxiliary IZAN "to be". This is illustrated in sentence (21) using the verb *erantzun* "to answer".

- (21) Mirenek niri erantzun dit.  
Miren-NORK I-NORI answer 3sNOR-UKAN-1sNORI-3sNORK  
Miren answered me.

On the basis of the evidence presented, it appears that the NOR verbs in Basque are unaccusative verbs and the NOR noun phrase is the d-object of a NOR verb. As discussed above, this analysis will account for thematic role assignment in the impersonal and anti-causative construction, the distribution of ZERIK case, and the membership of the NOR class. Although the NOR verbs have been called "intransitive", this term turns out to be inappropriate in that while the NOR verbs are intransitive in having a single argument, the NOR verbs include only the unaccusative verbs, one of the two subclasses of verbs that make up the class typically termed "intransitive" in other languages. The traditional description of the system of case marking as ergative is based on the implicit, but mistaken, assumption that the NOR class is an intransitive class in the broad sense. Therefore, a reassessment of the system of case marking in Basque is necessary.

It is now possible to reformulate the case assignment generalizations for Basque. In particular, the NOR noun phrase of both NOR and NOR-NORK verbs have been shown to be d-objects while the NORK noun phrase of a NOR-NORK verb (and of NORK verbs) are d-subjects. The generalization which results is simple:<sup>18</sup>

The NOR case is assigned to the d-object.  
The NORK case is assigned to the d-subject.

The system of case marking that emerges for Basque is unusual<sup>19</sup> since the generalization is stated in terms of d-structure grammatical relations and not

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18. Once the NOR verbs are recognized as unaccusative verbs, an alternative statement of auxiliary distribution in Basque is possible.

If a verb is unaccusative (i.e. [-T]), it selects the auxiliary IZAN "to be".

Otherwise, it selects the auxiliary UKAN "to have".

Given this analysis, it seems that auxiliary distribution in Basque resembles that in Italian. Italian, like Basque, has two auxiliaries, *essere* "to be" and *avere* "to have". Unaccusative verbs in both languages select the auxiliary "to be". The difference is that in Italian the auxiliary *essere* "to be" is also found in sentences with the clitic *si*, which has no counterpart in Basque. See Burzio (1981) for an extensive discussion and analysis of Italian auxiliary distribution. Zubizarreta (1982) suggests that selection of the auxiliary *essere* by unaccusative verbs is the core rule of *essere* selection and that the appearance of *essere* with the clitic *si* is a parasitic extension.

19. But this system of case marking is not unique. It appears to be precisely the system of case marking found in Georgian in the series II (aorist) tenses, according to Harris's analysis (1981).

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s-structure grammatical relations. In fact, the surface morphological case reflects the d-structure grammatical relations. It is neither an accusative or ergative system of case marking. In both these systems, case is assigned on the basis of s-structure grammatical relations. Both these systems are based on an opposition between a transitive and intransitive class of verbs, and the intransitive class includes all single argument verbs, whether unaccusative or unergative.

The assignment of case in Basque on the basis of d-structure grammatical relations raises the question of whether s-structure grammatical relations are at all relevant to Basque. In languages with an accusative system of case marking, the same notion of subject, s-subject, is relevant to both case assignment and to certain other phenomena, including control. In particular, both the single argument of an unaccusative verb and the d-subject (= s-subject) of a transitive verb will be the noun phrases which receive nominative case as well as the controlled noun phrase of a control construction. In this, they differ from the d-object (= s-object) of a transitive verb. Although in Basque the NOR noun phrase of a NOR (unaccusative) verb receives a different case from a NORK noun phrase of a NOR-NORK (transitive) verb, it turns out that the NOR noun phrase of a NOR verb patterns with the NORK noun phrase of a NOR-NORK verb with respect to control phenomena.

Basque shows a number of different types of control constructions.<sup>20</sup> All share the property that the controlled noun phrase in the embedded clause may be the NORK noun phrase of a NOR-NORK verb or the NOR noun phrase of a NOR verb, but it may never be the NOR noun phrase of a NOR-NORK verb. This property will be illustrated with one type of control construction, control in non-finite clauses with the verb in the perfect participle form.

One of the verbs selecting non-finite complements of this type is the phrasal verb *nahi ukan* "to want", as illustrated in (22).

- (22) Nik etorri nahi dut.  
 I-NORK come want 3sNOR-UKAN-1sNORK  
 I want to come.

The embedded clause has the verb in the perfect participle form but lacks an auxiliary. The auxiliary must be in the matrix clause since the verb in the embedded clause in (22) is a NOR verb that could not select the auxiliary UKAN. The NORK noun phrase is in the matrix clause as shown by the agreement on the auxiliary. The NORK noun phrase, the desirer, is the controller. The controlled noun phrase may be the NOR noun phrase of a NOR verb, as in (22), or it may be the NORK noun phrase of a

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20. See Goenaga (1980) for a survey of the types of non-finite clausal complements found in Basque.

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NOR-NORK verb as in (23).<sup>21</sup> It may not be the NOR noun phrase of a NOR-NORK verb, as shown by the unacceptability of (24).

- (23) Nik Miren ikusi nahi dut.  
I-NORK Miren-NOR see want 3sNOR-UKAN-1sNORK  
I want to see Miren.
- (24) \* Nik Mirenek ikusi nahi dut.  
I-NORK Miren-NORK see want 3sNOR-UKAN-1sNORK  
I want to be seen by Miren.

Sentence (25) again illustrates that the controlled noun phrase in a clause with a NOR-NORK verb is the NORK noun phrase.

- (25) Ikusi nahi dut.  
see want 3sNOR-UKAN-1sNORK  
I want to see (someone)./\*I want to be seen (by someone).

Although there are no overt noun phrases in the embedded clause, (25) is unambiguous with the NORK argument of the embedded clause receiving the controlled interpretation.

In order to account for control phenomena in Basque in the Government-Binding framework (Chomsky 1981), the NOR noun phrase of a NOR verb must be a subject, in particular a s-subject, since the controlled noun phrase of a control construction must be a subject in order to satisfy the principles of the Binding Theory. Therefore, the notion of s-subject is relevant to Basque for Binding Theory but not for case assignment. The d-structure grammatical relations in Basque are relevant to case assignment as well as to a number of other phenomena, including ZERIK distribution and the impersonal construction. Case marking and control in Basque do not refer to the same notions of grammatical relations.

The Theory of Case in the Government-Binding framework must be able to accommodate a system of case such as that in Basque, where case appears to be assigned on the basis of d-structure grammatical relations, as well as an accusative system, where case is assigned at s-structure. The system of case in Basque differs from an accusative system in its treatment of unaccusative verbs. In Basque, the same case marks the d-object of an unaccusative verb and the d-object (= s-object) of a transitive verb. But, the d-object of an unaccusative verb (i.e. NOR verb) in Basque does not share the same case as the s-subject (= d-subject) of a transitive verb (i.e. NOR-NORK verb). In contrast, in an accusative system of case the d-object of an

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21. Although not all control constructions in Basque require obligatory control, these control structures are structures of obligatory control, as shown by the impossibility of (i).

- (i) \* Nik Miren etorri nahi dut.  
I-NORK Miren-NOR come want 3sNOR-UKAN-1sNORK  
I want Miren to come.

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unaccusative verb is typically assigned the same case as the subject of a transitive verb, the nominative case, rather than the case of the object of a transitive verb, the accusative case.

In an accusative language, unaccusativity has been tied to a verb's inability to assign accusative case. Burzio (1981) has proposed an account of properties of unaccusative verbs in the Government-Binding framework based on the generalization:

$$[-T] \leftrightarrow [-A]$$

(the feature [-T] indicates the verb's inability to assign a thematic role to a subject; the feature [-A] the verb's inability to assign accusative case to an object.) Given this generalization, an unaccusative verb cannot assign case to its d-object which will fail to meet the Case Filter (the requirement that lexical noun phrases receive case) unless it can receive case in some other way, for example, by "movement" to subject position. This movement is allowed since unaccusative verbs are [-T]. Nominative case assignment and other subject properties of the d-object of an unaccusative verb will be explained by this analysis.

The observation that the d-object of both unaccusative and transitive verbs in Basque receive the same case suggests that unaccusative verbs in Basque can assign case directly,<sup>22</sup> just as transitive verbs do. The ability of an unaccusative verb to assign case to its object would distinguish the Basque system of case from an accusative system. Unaccusativity in Basque, then, would not be tied to a verb's inability to assign case. As a consequence, the motivation for movement of a lexical noun phrase d-object to subject position no longer exists in Basque. If an unaccusative verb can assign case directly to its d-object, the Case Filter will be met trivially. The d-object will not need to become a s-subject in order to receive case as in an accusative language. A lexical noun phrase d-object of an unaccusative verb in Basque would be an s-object.<sup>23</sup>

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22. An alternative approach to the Basque case system, the proposal that the case of the d-object of Basque unaccusative verbs is an instance of "quirky" case, does not seem promising. This proposal may look attractive since the quirky case would be associated with the d-object in Basque and quirky case is generally associated with d-objects. See L. Levin (1981) for arguments to this effect for Icelandic, and for an introduction to the properties of quirky case. But, Pesetsky (1982) points out that in Russian quirky case objects are not candidates for the genitive of negation, attributing this to a requirement that quirky case be present for thematic role assignment. Yet, in Basque, the d-objects of unaccusative verbs occur in the ZERIK case, suggesting that structural case is involved rather than quirky case.

23. A lexical noun phrase d-object of an unaccusative verb would not be expected to behave as a s-subject if Basque does not allow movement of lexical noun phrases. The properties of the antecedent-anaphor relation with both the reflexive and reciprocal anaphors in Basque support this prediction. See Levin (in prep.) for details, as well as additional discussion of issues concerning noun phrase movement in Basque.

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The fact that a notion of s-subject is necessary in Basque to account for the shared properties of the NOR noun phrase of a NOR verb and the NORK noun phrase of a NOR-NORK verb with respect to control, does not, as it might appear, pose a problem. The subject properties of the NOR noun phrase of a NOR verb (i.e. the d-object of an unaccusative verb) can be explained with a noun phrase movement analysis. Although the Basque case system precludes movement of lexical noun phrases in finite clauses, the movement of PRO in a non-finite clause required for control of the NOR noun phrase of a NOR verb is still possible.

The motivation for noun phrase movement depends on the nature of the clause/noun phrase pair. In particular, movement of PRO in non-finite clauses with unaccusative verbs follows from the requirement that PRO be ungoverned (Chomsky 1981), unlike movement of lexical noun phrases in finite clauses which follows from the requirement that lexical noun phrases receive case. Since the Binding Theory requires that PRO be ungoverned, a PRO d-object is only possible when PRO can move from object position, which is necessarily governed by the verb, to an ungoverned position such as the subject position of a non-finite clause. This movement is possible with an unaccusative verb since unaccusative verbs do not assign a thematic role to their subject.

Movement of a PRO d-object of an unaccusative verb in a non-finite clause would be expected in Basque even in the absence of movement of lexical noun phrases since the movement follows from the property that PRO be ungoverned and not from considerations of case assignment. Control phenomena in Basque confirm this expectation. Furthermore, the distinction made in the Government-Binding framework between the account of movement of noun phrases in finite and non-finite clauses may appear artificial in a language like English which shows movement of both lexical noun phrases in finite clauses and PRO in non-finite clauses. But, Basque provides support for a theory which distinguishes between the two types of movement.

To summarize, Basque, a language traditionally considered to have an ergative case system, has a system of case in which morphological case appears to be assigned on the basis of d-structure grammatical relations, rather than s-structure grammatical relations as in languages with an accusative case system. This analysis of the Basque case system follows once the NOR verbs, the so-called "intransitive" verbs of Basque, are recognized as unaccusative verbs. The existence of such a system of case marking can be accounted for within the Theory of Case in the Government-Binding framework by allowing unaccusative verbs in Basque to assign case to their objects, obviating the need for movement of lexical noun phrases. As a consequence of this analysis, a d-object of an unaccusative verb in Basque should show subject properties only if it is PRO and not if it is a lexical noun phrase, a prediction supported by control phenomena in Basque.



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