**Basque Perfect Periphrases in the dialectal continuum**

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, a distributional property which otherwise only inflected lexical verbs have; central varieties always have the lexical verb in between the auxiliary and the focus/wh-phrase in verbal periphrases (2,a,b); (iii) 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 (3); (iv) only eastern varieties have distinct non-finite transitive and intransitive auxiliaries (*izan* vs. *ukhan*), unlike central ones, in which only a general purpose one exists (*izan* “be/have”) (4); (v) Eastern dialects allow for post-auxiliary, participle internal negation (not an instance of constituent negation, see Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria, 2009) (5). Finally, Eastern dialects require simple unergative verbs to combine with *be*, instead of *have*, unlike in central/western dialects (6). This contrast is clearly reminiscent of the ergative/absolutive split arising in progressive periphrases in Basque, traditionally analysed as biclausal (see Laka, 2006). Outside the domain of periphrastic constructions proper, only eastern varieties have participial relatives (7). I will claim that those differences can be reduced to a single morphosyntactic parameter, consisting in the fact that eastern copulas can optionally realize a “synthetic verb” (De Rijk, 2008). 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 (lexically distinct) transitive and intransitive copulas. Under this view, eastern verbal periphrases can optionally correspond to fully biclausal structures, with the participle potentially expanding into a CP (cf. participial relatives). All the properties listed in (1-7) and others are shown to naturally follow from this hypothesis. 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 (see Mounole, 2011 for the historical record). This process was accomplished in western/central areas, but did not fully affect eastern varieties. The analysis of the variation internal to Basque can shed light on what counts as a minimal biclausal structure in the context of periphrastic constructions.

(1) Liburu bat eman dut/dakot gizon horri (E/\*C) **[E=Eastern ; C=Central]**

Book one-abs given aux(tr)/(ditr) 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” “Who came?/XABIER came”

(3) Errabia batek hartu ere/bezala du (E/\*C)

rage one-erg taken also/like has

“She has also/apparently been overcome by rage”

(4) Erosi nahi ukhan du (E/\*C) (5) JON da [ez etorri] (E/\*C)

buy-partc want had has Jon is not come

“He wanted to buy it” “It is JON who did not come”

(6) a. Dantzatu du (C/\*E) b. Dantzatu da (E/\*C)

danced has danced is

“He/she danced” “He/she danced”

(7) Jonek erosi liburua (E/\*C)

Jon-erg bought book-D

“The book that Jon bought”