

Licit and illicit ERG-DAT pairings

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Abstract

In this article we will offer a new analysis for the incompatibility between ergative (ERG) and dative (DAT) arguments found in Basque with certain ergatively-marked unaccusative predicates, in particular, *irudi* ‘seem’ verbs and the modals *behar* ‘need’ and *nahi* ‘want’. We will claim that this incompatibility follows in Basque from a condition on the Case-values encoded in the lexical verb (V). The conflict arises when the single probe V enters into a multiple Agree relation with its two internal arguments: it requires two valued sets of Case-features on V. The values of the two sets must satisfy a Distinctness Condition, that is, they must be distinct. Since ERG and DAT cases are morphologically alike and share the feature [+Marked], pairings of ERG and DAT will violate it. Obviously, the incompatibility does not arise with ABS arguments because of their morphological underspecification. In developing our analysis, we will broaden the corpus of data initially covered by previous works on the topic (Albizu 2001b 2004 and Albizu & Fernández 2002). This new account will be shown to be superior to those previous analyses on empirical and theoretical grounds.

0. Introduction*

In this article we will offer a new analysis on a little-studied incompatibility between ergative (ERG)¹ and dative (DAT) arguments in Basque. This incompatibility is only found in the language in some (exceptional) instances of ergatively-marked unaccusative predicates –and never with ditransitive predicates. More precisely, the incompatibility is observed in two types of constructions: on the one hand, with verbs of the *irudi* ‘seem’ class (henceforth, *irudi* verbs) and, on the other, in restructuring constructions involving the modal verbs *behar* ‘need’ and *nahi* ‘want’. The phenomenon is illustrated by the basic contrast in (1), which includes examples corresponding to the unaccusative verb *irudi* ‘seem’:

- (1) a. Jonek zintzoa zirudien
Jon.E honest seem.PST
‘Jon seemed honest’

* Our contribution in this article is laid out in sections 5 through 8. The first four sections reproduce with minor adjustments the paper we read at the *XII Coloquio de Gramática Generativa*, Universidad Nova de Lisboa (Lisbon, April 15-17, 2002). We would like to thank Javi Ormazabal and Esther Torrego for their comments on aspects of previous stages of our research. Needless to say, any error is our own. This work has been partly supported with funds granted to several research projects by the University of the Basque Country (UPV-EHU 9 UPV 00114.130-160.09-2004 U); the Ministerio de Ciencia y Tecnología and FEDER (BFF2002-04238-C02-01), and the Ministerio de Ciencia y Tecnología and the European Science Foundation (BFF2002-10379-E).

¹ The following abbreviations will be used throughout the text: A(BS) = absolutive; E(RG) = ergative; D(AT) = dative; GEN = genitive; AGR = agreement; 1-2-3 = 1st, 2nd and 3rd person; PL = plural; SG = singular; ASP = aspect; COMP = complementizer; DET = determiner; NOM = nominalizer; PST = past; FUT = future; T = tense; V = verb; *v* = verb. We should point out that the glosses we present are not exhaustive, but include only the minimal information that is relevant for a correct understanding of the Basque sentences as well as of our analysis. In addition, we systematically avoid glossing any morphological information that is phonologically unrealized, as for instance present tense and 3rd person ERG and ABS agreement.

- b. *Jonek zintzoa zirudi(z)dan
 Jon.E seem/1SGD/PST
 ‘Jon seemed honest to me’

To the best of our knowledge, the only theoretical research on these facts is our own recent work (Albizu 2001b 2004; Albizu & Fernández 2002). There, we argued that this co-occurrence restriction was ultimately a syntactic violation of the *Locality* condition on *Agree* (Chomsky 1998 1999). (Un)Fortunately, in the years past we have found some contradicting data in the language and have also detected some weaknesses in our theoretical proposal. Because of that, in this article we want to develop an alternative analysis. Hopefully, it will account for the full set of data in a more consistent and sounded way.

In this article we will claim that the incompatibility between ERG and DAT arguments with unaccusative predicates follows in Basque from a condition on the Case-values encoded in the lexical verb (V). The conflict arises when the single probe V enters into a multiple *Agree* relation with its two internal arguments: it requires two valued sets of Case-features on V. The values of the two sets must satisfy a Distinctness Condition, that is, they must be distinct. Since ERG and DAT cases are morphologically alike and share the feature [+Marked] –see Albizu & Eguren (2000) and Albizu (2002)–, pairings of ERG and DAT cases will violate it. Obviously, the incompatibility does not arise with ABS arguments because of their opposite morphological specification.

This main idea will be complemented with the following proposals or assumptions. Firstly, we revive Ortiz de Urbina’s (1989) case-system by maintaining that Tense always carries a valued Case-feature (ERG or ABS), its specific value being dependent upon the complement it takes. Secondly, we adopt Pesetsky and Torrego’s (2004) version of *Agree* as a feature sharing operation which allows multiple instances of a feature. Thirdly, in connection to the previous point, we propose that the instances of a feature can be mapped to PF in different positions. And last but not least, our analysis assumes Haddican’s (2005) monoclausal analysis of *behar/nahi* constructions.

This article is organized as follows. The first three sections will be devoted to the presentation of the basic data: section 1 will describe the main traits of the ergative case-system of Basque; sections 2 and 3 will introduce the ERG/DAT clash in the two types of constructions that display the phenomenon: on the one hand, *irudi* verbs and, on the other, restructuring structures involving the modal verbs *behar* ‘need’ and *nahi* ‘want’. We will undertake the theoretical discussion in section 4, where we will lay out our previous analysis of the phenomenon. This analysis will be discussed and rejected on empirical and theoretical grounds in section 5. The gist of the article comes in sections 6 through 8. Section 6 will define the nature of the restriction by proposing a Distinctness Condition. Section 7 will introduce most of the other technical aspects of our current proposal: case-system, feature-sharing view of *Agree*, syntactic structure of restructuring *behar/nahi* constructions. Section 8 will deal with the issue of how multiple instances of a feature are mapped to PF. This article will be finished off in section 9 with some concluding remarks.

1. Basque ergativity: a basic characterization

As is well-known, Basque is a clear-cut ergative language at the morphological level and its ergativity is reflected in three different aspects of its morphology: its nominal declensional system (ergative $-k$ vs. absolutive $-\emptyset$), its verbal agreement system (ergative suffixes vs. absolutive prefixes) and the distribution of verbal auxiliary forms ([+ERG] auxiliaries **edun/*ezan* ‘have’ vs. elsewhere auxiliaries *izan/*edin* ‘be’). This is illustrated by the sentences in (2): the unaccusative sentence in (2a) and two the transitive ones in (2b-c).

- (2) a. Ni etxera etorri n-aiz
I.A home.to come.ASP 1SGA-be
‘I have come home’
- b. Ni-k zu ikusi z-aitu-t
I-E you.A see.ASP 2SGA-have-1SGE
‘I have seen you’
- c. Zu-k ni ikusi n-au-zu
You-E I.A see.ASP 1SGA-have-2SGE
‘You have seen me’

The ergativity or non-ergativity of a construction is initially determined by the unaccusative or transitive nature of the verb. There are, however, syntactic –i.e., the type of construction, as for instance in impersonal, middle, inchoative and dialectal reflexive/reciprocal sentences– and morphological –i.e., the presence of allocutive morphology in the verbal complex– factors that may prevail over the verb and change the case-pattern of a particular construction.²

In principle, DAT arguments do not interfere in Basque with the case-pattern of the language. Consider the examples in (3). In (3), the unaccusative sentence in (3a) and the transitive sentence in (3b) assign ABS and ERG case, respectively, to their subjects, no matter the inclusion of the DAT arguments *Mikeli* ‘to Mikel’ and *niri* ‘to me’:

- (3) a. Ni geroago hurbilduko natzaio Mikeli
I.A later approach.ASP.FUT 1SGA/be/3SGD Mikel.D
‘I will approach Mikel later’
- b. Zuk niri bulegora bidali didazu gutuna
you.E I.D office.to send.ASP have/1SGD/2SGE letter.A
‘You have sent me the letter to my office’

Crucially, however, there are two syntactic environments where DAT arguments do interfere with the case-pattern of a sentence. The two constructions involve the *irudi* ‘seem’ class of verbs and the modal verbs *behar* ‘need’ and *nahi* ‘want’. In both cases the DAT argument blocks ergativity.

Let us begin with the introduction of the relevant data. We will consider *irudi* verbs first.

² See Albizu (2001a) and references therein.

2. *Irudi* verbs: a conflict between ERG and DAT cases

In Basque, the class of *irudi* verbs comprises *irudi* ‘seem’ itself and *eman* ‘seem’ (literally ‘give’).³ As a distinctive feature, these two verbs assign ERG case to their subjects and select a [+ERG] auxiliary –that is, **edun* ‘have’ or **ezan* ‘have’– in spite of their syntactic and semantic unaccusativity.⁴ This is shown in (4), where the Theme-argument *Jonek* carries the ERG marker and triggers the use of the [+ERG] auxiliary **edun*. All the examples in this section have been taken or minimally adapted from Artiagoitia (2001b):

- (4) *Jonek zintzoa zirudien / ematen zuen*
 Jon.E honest seem.PST / seem.ASP have/PST
 ‘*Jon seemed honest*’

The same ERG pattern is observed when these verbs take finite clausal complements, as shown in (5). In Basque there are two types of *irudi*-constructions with clausal complements: on the one hand, the construction in (5a), which takes a null expletive as subject; on the other, a *copy-raising* structure in which the main subject is raised from within the complement clause, that is, (5b).⁵ In both cases, the ergativity of the construction is signaled by the selection of the [+ERG] auxiliary *zuen*. In addition, in (5b) the ERG pattern of the construction is also reflected by the case of the raised subject *Jonek*:

- (5) a. *pro_{expl} [Jon nekatuta zegoela] zirudien / ematen zuen*
 Jon.E tired be.PST.COMP seem.PST / seem.ASP have.PST
 ‘*It seemed that Jon was tired*’
 b. *Jonek [nekatuta zegoela] zirudien / ematen zuen*⁶
 Jon.ERG tired be.PST.COMP seem.PST / seem.ASP have.PST
 Lit.: ‘*John seemed that he was tired*’

Crucially, the addition of a DAT argument to the examples in (4) and (5) cancels the ergativity of the construction, as shown by the corresponding sentences in (6) and (7):

- (6) **Jonek zintzoa zirudi(z)dan / ematen zidan.*
 Jon.E seem.1SGD.PST / seem.ASP have.1SGD.PST
 ‘*Jon seemed honest to me*’
 (7) a. **pro_{expl} [Jon nekatuta zegoela] iruditu zidan*
 Jon.A tired be.PST.COMP seem.ASP have.1SGD.PST
 Lit.: ‘*It seemed to me that Jon was tired*’
 b. **Jonek [nekatuta zegoela] iruditu zidan*
 Jon.E tired be.PST.COMP seem.ASP have.1SGD.PST
 Lit.: ‘*John seemed to me that he was tired*’

³ It also belongs to this class *iduri* ‘picture’, a dialectal variation of *irudi* which is a noun properly speaking. To the best of our knowledge, the behavior of *iduri* fits our description of *irudi* and *eman* in this section.

⁴ See Artiagoitia (2001ab) for a detailed characterization and analysis of these constructions. See also Salaburu (1987).

⁵ Artiagoitia (2001ab) provides threefold evidence –scope ambiguities, their incompatibility with causative constructions and certain control facts– in favor of a *copy-raising* analysis of (5b).

⁶ According to Artiagoitia (2001ab), most but not all Basque speakers accept the sentence in (5b).

In these cases, the only alternative available to Basque speakers is to mark the Theme-argument with ABS case and to select the [-ERG] auxiliary *izan* ‘be’. Their respective repaired options are introduced in (8) and (9):⁷

- (8) Jon zintzoa iruditzen zitzaidan.
 Jon.A seem.ASP be.1SGD.PST
 ‘Jon seemed honest to me’
- (9) a. pro_{expl} [Jon nekatuta zegoela] iruditu zitzaidan
 Jon.A tired be.PST.COMP seem.ASP be.1SGD.PST
 Lit.: ‘It seemed to me that Jon was tired’
 b. Jon [nekatuta zegoela] iruditu zitzaidan
 Jon.A tired be/PST/COMP seem.ASP be.1SGD.PST
 Lit.: ‘John seemed to me that he was tired’

3. A second clash between ERG/DAT cases: modals *behar* ‘need’ and *nahi* ‘want’

3.1. Transparent modal constructions with *behar* and *nahi*

A similar restriction can also be found in some particular constructions involving the modal verbs *behar* ‘need’ and *nahi* ‘want’. In Basque, *behar* and *nahi* may both take nominal and clausal complements This is shown in (10a) and (10b-c), respectively:⁸

- (10) a. Nik aholkua behar/nahi dut
 I.E advice.A need/want have.1SGE
 ‘I need/want somebody’s advice’
 b. Nik_i [e_i Mikel aholkatu] behar/nahi dut
 I.E Mikel.A advise need/want have.1SGERG
 ‘I need/want to give Mikel advice’
 c. Nik_i [e_j*_i Mikel aholkatzea] behar/nahi dut
 I.E Mikel.A advise.NOM.DET need/want have.1SGE
 ‘I need/want somebody to give Mikel advice’

Insofar as these verbs are transitive, the construction displays all the earmarks of an ERG construction: in (10), the subject *nik* ‘I’ takes the ERG declensional marker */-k/*, the corresponding verbal agreement is expressed by means of the suffixal marker */-t/* and the modal verb selects the [+ERG] auxiliary **edun* ‘have’.

In (10), it is also the case that non-finite clausal complements are of two types: first, a complement clause in which the embedded verb appears in its participial form (10b); and second, an infinitival clause in which the embedded verb exhibits the nominalizer suffix */-tze-/* (10c). The former are monoclausal structures involving restructuring (Etxepare 2003; Haddican 2005);⁹ the

⁷ As an incidental remark, the reader should note that the repairing-strategy is not available for *eman*, but only for *irudi*.

⁸ See Ormazabal (1991), Ortiz de Urbina (2003) and Goenaga (this volume), among others.

⁹ See section 7.1.

latter are biclausal and the reference of main and embedded subjects must be disjoined. Here will just be concerned about the restructuring constructions in (10b).

As it has often been pointed out in the literature, restructuring constructions with *behar* and *nahi* stand out in that they seem to be transparent with regard to at least three syntactic properties: (i) the order of constituents for embedded arguments, (ii) main verbs' agreement with embedded arguments, and (iii) modal verbs' auxiliary selection.

Let us review these three properties. To begin with, in the restructuring structures arguments enjoy a higher degree of mobility as regards constituent-ordering. Embedded arguments may thus appear dislocated and occupy positions otherwise restricted to arguments of higher clauses. This can be seen in (11). In this example, the internal argument –*gonbidatuei* ‘to the guests’– shows up dislocated to the right of the modal verb, whereas the embedded verb and its other complements are kept to its left. On the contrary, in the obviative constructions in (12) the same linear ordering yields the sentence as ungrammatical:

(11) Aitorrek [t_i gonbitak bidali] behar/nahi dizkie gonbidatuei_i
 Aitor.E invitations.A send need/want have.PLA.PLD guests.D
 ‘Aitor needs/wants to send guests their invitations’

(12) *Aitorrek [t_i gonbitak bidaltzea] behar/nahi zuen gonbidatuei_i
 Aitor.E invitations.A enviar.NOM.A need/want have.PST guests.D
 ‘Aitor needed/wanted somebody to send guests their invitations’

Another atypical property of these restructuring structures is the fact that auxiliary verbs coindex not only the matrix subject but also the lower internal arguments. Agreement is not optional but mandatory, and arguments' failure to do so renders the sentence ill-formed:

(13) a. Aitorrek gonbitak bidali behar/nahi dizkie gonbidatuei
 Aitor.E invitations.A send need/want have.PLA.PLD guests.D
 ‘Aitor needs/wants to send guests their invitations’
 b. *Aitorrek gonbitak bidali behar/nahi du gonbidatuei
 Aitor.E invitations.A send need/want have guests.D
 ‘Aitor needs/wants to send guests their invitations’

Finally, restructuring structures may also be transparent with respect to case-assignment and auxiliary selection. In some varieties of Basque, the case assigned to the main subject and the auxiliary that escorts the main verb are determined by the transitivity or unaccusativity nature of its complement-predicate, not by the modal verbs themselves. Take the examples in (14) and (15). The former introduces a sentence with the unaccusative verb *altxatu* ‘get up’, while the second involves the transitive verb *bidali* ‘send’:

(14) Ni bihar goiz altxatu behar/nahi naiz¹⁰
 I.A tomorrow early get up need/want 1SGA.be
 ‘I need/want to get up early tomorrow’

¹⁰ This transparency-property is more restricted dialectally in the case of *nahi* than in that of *behar*.

- (15) Aitorrek ezkontzarako gonbitak bidali behar/nahi ditu.
 Aitor.E wedding.for invitations.A send need/want have.PLA
 ‘Aitor needs/wants to send his wedding-invitations’

In the unaccusative example in (14), the subject *ni* ‘I’ is marked absolutely and the auxiliary chosen is the [-ERG] form *naiz* ‘1SGA.BE’; on the contrary, in the transitive example of (15) the subject *Aitorrek* now bears the ERG suffix /-k/ and the auxiliary selected is the [+ERG] form *ditu* ‘have.PLA’.

However, in most dialectal varieties of Basque modal restructuring constructions are opaque regarding their case-pattern. That is, the modal verb prevails over the embedded predicate and therefore the structures are fully ergative, no matter the nature of their complement clause. This variety will thus display a paradigm that comprises (15) and (16):

- (16) Nik etxera hurbildu behar/nahi dut
 I.E home.to approach need/want have.1SGE
 ‘I need/want to get close to home’ [adapted from Ortiz de Urbina 2003]

3.2. The relevant facts

The variety that interests us for our purposes is the one that fits the pattern in (15) and (16). Very significantly, in this variety the construction’s case-pattern is sensitive to the inclusion of a DAT argument in the complement clause. Compare the previous sentences in (15) and (16) to the ones we now introduce in (17) and (18). The new examples simply add the DAT arguments *berari* ‘to him’ and *gonbidatuei* ‘to the guests’ to (16) and (15), respectively:

- (17) *Nik berari hurbildu behar/nahi diot
 I.E he.D approach need/want have.3SGD.1SGE
 ‘I need/want to get close to him’ [adapted from Ortiz de Urbina 2003]
- (18) Aitorrek gonbitak bidali behar/nahi dizkie gonbidatuei
 Aitor.E invitations.A send need/want have.PLA.PLD guests.DAT
 ‘Aitor needs/wants to send guests their invitations’

As can be seen, unaccusative and ditransitive constructions do not pattern alike in both examples: in (17), the DAT argument makes no difference in the ditransitive construction and the resulting sentence is grammatical; however, in (18) the unaccusative predicate turns out incompatible with it.

The ungrammaticality of (18) is due to the clash between ERG and DAT, in parallel to what we have already shown for *irudi* verbs. This is revealed by the fact that the language circumvents the restriction in (18) by dispensing with either of the two cases. The general repairing strategy is to cancel the ergativity of the construction, that is, the sentence in (19). To be compatible with the DAT argument, the main subject has to be marked with ABS case and the sentence has to make use of the [-ERG] auxiliary *izan* ‘ser’:

- (19) Ni berari hurbildu behar/nahi natzaio
 I.A 1SGA.be.3SGD
 ‘I must/want to get close to him’ [adapted from Ortiz de Urbina 2003]

As a second option, a reduced number of speakers may hold to the ergative case-pattern of the structure, but at the cost of losing the DAT agreement morphology on the verb, as in (20):

- (20) Nik berari hurbildu behar/nahi dut.
 I.E he.D approach need/want have.1SGE
 ‘I need/want to get close to him’ [adapted from Ortiz de Urbina 2003]

In short, *irudi* verbs and *behar/nahi* modal verbs show the existence in Basque of a striking incompatibility between DAT arguments and the ERG case-pattern of the language. Very significantly, the restriction only arises with unaccusative predicates and fails to apply to transitive ones.

4. The previous approach: DAT’s intervention effect on ergativity (Albizu 2001b 2004; Albizu & Fernández 2002)

Because of its idiosyncratic flavor, the phenomenon we are dealing with in this article has been pretty much ignored by the theoretical studies on Basque grammar to date. The only precedents we know of are some recent contributions of ours (Albizu 2001b 2004; Albizu & Fernández 2002). In those previous works, we advocated the syntactic nature of the conflict between ERG and DAT arguments and argued that such co-occurrence restriction was ultimately a syntactic violation of the *Locality* condition on *Agree* (Chomsky 1999). According to the *Locality* condition, every agreement relation is local, that is, without the interposition of any other potential candidate. Under this view, the ungrammatical DAT and ERG co-occurrences match with syntactic structures in which the DAT argument intervenes between the ERG-case assigning T probe and its goal, the Theme-argument.

In those works, for brevity’s sake, we limited our presentation of the analysis to the examples with *behar* and *nahi*. Descriptively, *behar/nahi* constructions offered a more complex picture than *irudi* verbs and subsumed the theoretical problems raised by the latter. Besides, the two of them received a parallel syntactic treatment as raising-constructions,¹¹ so that the conclusions drawn on *behar/nahi* could also be easily extended to the *irudi* cases.

In those proposals, we first considered the sentence in (16), now reproduced in (21a) for convenience. Recall that (21a) illustrates the variety in which the case-pattern of the main clause is defined by the modal itself. That is, the auxiliary chosen is the [+ERG] auxiliary **edun* ‘have’ and the sentential subject gets ERG case despite the unaccusativity of its clausal complement. (21b) offers an schematic representation of (21a)’s syntactic structure:

- (21) a. Nik etxera hurbildu behar/nahi dut
 I.E home.to approach need/want have.1SGE
 ‘I need/want to get close to home’

¹¹ Our account for *irudi* verbs was built upon Artiagoitia’s (2001ab) analysis for these verbs.

responds to the double DP/PP nature of DAT argument in the language and, second, manifests a basic asymmetry in the hierarchical configuration of both internal arguments in syntax. Their proposal is summarized by the schema in (26):

- (26) a. Clitic-doubled constructions: [VP DP_{DAT} V DP_{ACC}]
 b. Non-doubled constructions: [VP DP_{ACC} V PP_{DAT}]

Bearing this idea in mind, the grammaticality of (26) is once again straightforward under this system. Given the low syntactic position of the DAT argument as complement of V, it may no longer c-command the ABS one. As a result, in (26) the closest goal to the probe T is now the ABS argument itself, so the Agree operation becomes licit.

5. Against an intervention account

Though appealing, an analysis along these lines faces empirical and theoretical problems.

5.1. Filling the gaps in the corpus

To begin with, the corpus of data covered falls short, as the list of ergatively-marked unaccusative predicates goes beyond *behar*, *nahi* and *irudi* verbs. A look at those instances gives us a new perspective on the phenomenon: DAT and ERG coexist in all of them.

For instance, the movement verbs *urten* ‘go out/leave’ and *igon* ‘raise’ also belong to this group, as shown by (27a) and (28a). *Urten* ‘go out/leave’ and *igon* ‘raise’ are Western phonetic/morphological variants of Standard *irten* and *igo* respectively; yet, the ergative uses in (27) and (28) are confined to this dialectal variety. Interestingly, when both verbs take a DAT argument, we will find no clash with the ERG argument ((b) examples):

- (27) a. Txistulariek bederatzietan urtengo dute
 txistu-players.E nine.at leave.ASP have.3PLE
 ‘Txistu players will leave at nine o’clock’ (Zuazo 2000:117)
 b. Orrek bidera urten dosku
 that.E way.to go-out.ASP have.1PLD
 ‘That has come to our way’
- (28) a. Urak leihoraino igon eban
 I.E window.to rise.ASP have.PST
 ‘The water rose up to the window’
 b. Ardoak burura igon eustan
 wine.E head.to rise.ASP have.1SGD.PST
 ‘The wine went to my head’

Two other exceptions are the verbal complex *berdin+copula* ‘be the same’ (29a), formed by an adjective (*berdin*) and a copula, and the verb *balio izan* ‘be worth/useful/valid’ (30a)-(31a).¹⁴

¹⁴ The verb *balio* ‘be worth/useful’ should not be confused with the homonymous complex verb *balio+izan* ‘be worth/useful’ (*balio* noun + auxiliary *izan*). The latter is a ditransitive predicate, not a dyadic unaccusative. Indeed, the nominal element

These two uses are quite general in Basque: in the former case, the choice between the ergative and absolutive patterns seems kind of optional for the most part; in the latter, the ergative pattern is mandatory. Again, no conflict arises between DAT and ERG ((b) examples):

- (29) a. Berdin {*/du/dio} zure iritziak
 same have/ have.3SGD you.GEN opinion.E
 ‘Your opinion is all the same (to anyone).’
 b. Berdin dit zure iritziak
 same have.1SGD you.GEN opinion.E
 ‘Your opinion is all the same to me.’
- (30) a. Zertarako balioko du pilula horrek?
 what.for worth.ASP have pill that.E
 ‘What will that pill be useful for?’
 b. Onddoetarako balioko dit makila horrek
 mushroom.for worth.ASP have.1SGD stick that.E
 ‘That stick will be useful for me at (collecting) mushrooms’
- (31) a. Ez du balio goizegi ateratze{a/ak}
 not have worth early.too leave.NOM.A(E)
 ‘To leave too early is not valid’
 b. Ez dit balioko fotokopiak ekartze{a/ak}
 not have.1SGD worth.ASP photocopy bring.NOM.A(E)
 ‘It will not be valid for me if somebody brings photocopies’

Another good candidate is the unaccusative verb *merezi* ‘be worth’.¹⁵ For most speakers, the nominalized clause embedded to *merezi* bears ABS case; however, a reduced group of speakers mark it with ERG case (32a). See Euskaltzaindia (1995) on this. As with the previous verbs, DAT-ERG pairings are grammatical (32b):

- (32) a. Merezi du horrela bizitze{a/(*)ak}
 worth have that-way live.NOM.{A/E}
 ‘It is worth to live that way’
 b. Merezi dit honela bizitze{a/(*)ak}
 worth have.1SGD this-way live.NOM.{A/E}
 ‘It is worth to me to live this way’

displays object-like properties: it allows adjectival modification and may bear partitive case-marking. *Orotariko Euskal Hiztegia* (1989) provides the relevant examples. This same explanation works for *axola/ardura*+ auxiliary ‘matter’.

¹⁵ Of course, this has to be distinguished from the transitive use of *merezi* ‘deserve’:

(i) Mikelek merezi du horrela bizitze{a/*ak}
 Mikel.E deserve have that-way live.NOM.{A/E}
 ‘Jon deserves to live that way’

At this point, it is important to note that all the predicates in (27) to (32) trigger no clash between ERG and DAT when they enter into a restructuring construction with *behar* or *nahi*. For brevity's sake, we only illustrate it with *urten* and *balio izan*:

- (33) Orrek bidera urten biar dosku
 that.E way.to go-out.ASP need have.1PLD
 'That has come to our way'
- (34) Balio beharko dit euro horrek, bestela...
 worth need. ASP have.1SGD euro that.E otherwise
 'That euro has to be useful (enough) for me, otherwise...'

Finally, to complete our presentation of the full range of data,¹⁶ we would like to make an entry of a rare exception to the general pattern of the modal *behar* (not *nahi*). As reported by Euskaltzaindia (2001), there are a few modern examples in the literature where the insertion of the modal *behar* changes an ABS-DAT case-pattern into an ERG-ABS-DAT one. The following is an example borrowed from Euskaltzaindia (2001) and attributed to Zaitegi:

- (34) Lotu behar diogu ikasteari (vs. lotu gatzazkio)
 take-to need have.3SGD.1SGE study.NOM.D 1PLA.be.3SGD
 'We must take to studying'

In short, all in all one may single out four different patterns with regard to the ergative marking of unaccusative predicates. The four options are represented by (i) *hurbildu* –(15)-(17)–, (ii) *irudi* –(4)-(9)–, (iii) *lotu* –(34)–, and (iv) *urten* and *balio izan* –(27)-(33):

- (35) A typology of unaccusative predicates' ergative patterns:

	ERG	behar ERG	DAT-ERG	Behar DAT-ERG
<i>hurbildu</i>	*	√	*	*
<i>irudi</i>	√	√	*	*
<i>lotu</i> (Zaitegi)			*	√
<i>urten</i> <i>balio</i>	√	√	√	√

¹⁶ Fernández (2004) studied some agreement patterns in the Basque variety of Hondarrabia that might look like additional exceptions to the phenomenon. In this variety an unaccusative predicate may, under certain conditions, appear along with a ditransitive auxiliary that bears ERG inflectional morphology. In (i), we slightly adapt an example from Fernández (2004:91):

(i) Zuri marmitakoa(*k) gustatzen dizu
 you.D marmitako.A(*E) like.ASP have-2SGD

'You like the tuna and potato stew' (lit. 'The tuna and potato stew is pleasant to you')

However, notice that the Experienced-argument takes ABS case, never ERG. On this basis, Fernández argues that this exceptional auxiliary selection is strictly a morphological phenomenon, not a syntactic one. See Fernández (2004) for more details. If correct, and we think it is, the Hondarrabia facts do not belong here.

In the light of (35), we get a very different picture of the phenomenon. Two aspects must be stressed. On the one hand, the case-restriction is much less general than we initially thought: non-constraining environments are basically on an equal footing with constraining ones; in fact, some modern uses –(34) and ERG markings in (32)– seem to point to a progressive extension of the former.

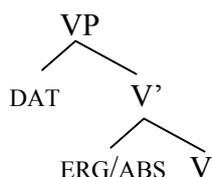
On the other hand, in (35) an implicative generalization on ERG/DAT clashes emerges: if V allows combining ERG and DAT arguments, then *behar* + V does it too. The generalization makes clear that the source of the incompatibility has to be searched mainly on V and that the modal verbs are only indirect triggers in the restriction. Indeed, leaving Zaitegi's examples (34) aside, the ERG/DAT combination is licit or illicit with modals depending on whether or not the underlying predicate itself licenses it: the grammatical *balio dit* and *urten dit* give the grammatical *balio behar dit* and *urten behar dit*; likewise, the ungrammatical **hurbildu dit* and *iruditu dit* lead to the ungrammatical **hurbildu behar dit* and *iruditu behar dit*.

5.2. A main theoretical problem: unaccusative classes and the irrelevancy of c-command

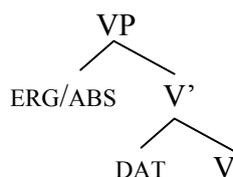
The intervention analysis faces a more serious problem however. This second problem is a theoretical one. The intervention effect we appealed to relies on a syntactic configuration where the DAT argument c-commands the ERG/ABS one; this way the DAT argument blocks the raising of the ERG Theme-argument to the specifier of TP. Nevertheless, several researchers (Artiagoitia 2000 and references therein) have hinted at the idea that unaccusative predicates escape a unitary analysis. Thus, they have suggested that unaccusative verbs may fall into two types, DAT-ABS and ABS-DAT, according to several typical tests for structural relations. The tests they used are word-order, anaphora binding, weak crossover. The issue is a bit murky because of several factors (animacy, affectedness, binding requirements, etc.) that disturb and mask their 'regular' structure. Anyhow, once those disturbing factors are controlled, their claim is backed up by the data (Fernández & Albizu in progress).

In Fernández & Albizu (in progress), we argue that unaccusative predicates are indeed split into two groups: the *gustatu* 'like' class and the *etorri* 'come' class. The former corresponds to DAT-ABS verbs. With these predicates, DAT arguments display subject properties and are generated in a position higher than ABS arguments. In addition to *gustatu*, it includes *irudi*, *balio izan*, *berdin izan*, *merezi* and other verbs like *gertatu* 'happen', *falta izan* 'miss', *komeni izan* 'be convenient', etc. The second group includes *etorri* 'come', *joan* 'go', *ibili* 'walk' and so on. These are ABS-DAT verbs, which project ABS arguments higher than DAT ones. In this case, it is ABS cases that display subject properties. The two relevant syntactic configurations are represented in (36):

(36) a. *Gustatu* class:



b. *Etorri* class:



Needless to say, our intervention analysis gets to grips with the double structure in (36). Obviously, it still works out well in (36a) as an account for the impossible **iruditu zidan* (7) and **iruditu behar zidan*: the Goal argument still c-commands the Theme. If we move to (36b), however, the ungrammaticality of **etorri behar diot* (17) turns out problematic. Since the c-command relation between the two arguments is just the opposite, the Theme should be free to raise to [Spec, TP] and check its ERG case.

The inadequacy of this proposal is further underscored by the data we have brought up in the previous subsection. As it turns out, the structure in (36b) is consistent with its corresponding data, namely, the grammatical *urten (behar) dosku* –(27) and (33)– and *igon (behar) eustan* (28); on the contrary, the one in (35a) now incorrectly predicts the ungrammaticality of *balio (behar) dit* –(29) and (34)– and examples alike.

On the whole, an incorrect theoretical assumption on unaccusatives' syntactic projection led us to an incorrect formal explanation. That account missed the point as regards the descriptive generalization that c-command relations have no bearing on licit/illicit ERG-DAT combinations.

To sum up, in section 5 we have shown that our previous analysis in terms of an intervention effect has serious shortcomings: it falls short on the descriptive side and is built on incorrect theoretical assumptions. The upshot of it is that it gives us unwanted results. Four descriptive generalizations on the phenomenon have emerged throughout the discussion: (i) it is sensitive to the type of predicate (ditransitive vs. dyadic unaccusative); (ii) licit ERG-DAT pairings are at least as general as illicit ones; (iii) it is a condition on V (sometimes mediated by outside elements, for instance, modals); and (iv) c-command relations are irrelevant.

6. On the nature of the constraint: the Distinctness Condition

In this article we would like to argue that the grammaticality/ungrammaticality of the data under study is governed by a Distinctness Condition that is active in Basque. This condition is formulated in (37):

(37) Distinctness Condition:

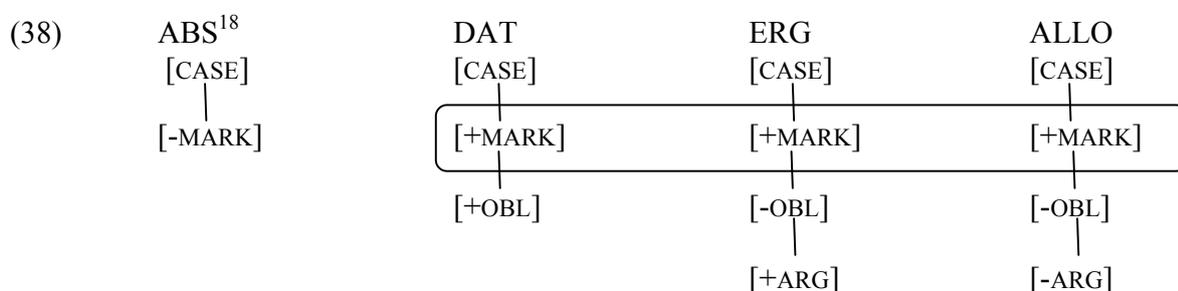
If a single head contains two or more sets of features for F, the values of these sets must be distinct.

The insight underlying (37) is that under certain locality conditions the 'excessive' likeness of two linguistic objects hampers their interpretation at the interfaces; on the contrary, contrasts render it easier. As stated, the Distinctness Condition establishes two pre-requisites for its application. The first one is a locality condition: the multiple specifications for the feature F must be at the same head. Intuitively, this very local domain seems a natural one for a likeness condition of the sort of (37) to apply. An immediate effect of this locality pre-requisite is that it gives us a straightforward account for the asymmetry between ditransitive and dyadic unaccusative predicates. In the ditransitive predicates the conflicting case-features [ERG] and [DAT] belong to different heads: the [ERG] one, to *v* (or T); the [DAT] one, to V. In the dyadic unaccusative predicates, on the contrary, the two case-features are specified at V because of the

internal nature of its two syntactic arguments. Some additional details will still be worked out in section 7.¹⁷

Besides locality, the condition in (37) also sets a pre-requisite on features' values: they must be distinct. In this article we want to argue that DAT-ERG pairings are filtered out by this pre-requisite, whereas DAT-ABS combinations are not. It follows from this that we take the features [ERG] and [DAT] to be non-distinct.

Albizu & Eguren (2000) and Albizu (2002) have argued that ABS, DAT, ERG and ALLO cases are not morphological primitives themselves –that is, they are not atomic features [ABS], [DAT], [ERG] and [ALLO]– but labels that represent clusters of features organized into hierarchical structures. Under this view, the four cases are redefined according to the three basic binary features [\pm MARK(ed)], [\pm OBL(ique)] and [\pm ARG(ument)]. The proposal gives us the four characterizations below:



Crucially, in (38) the DAT, ERG and ALLO cases are non-distinct in that they are all specified with the feature [+MARK]; likewise, the three contrast with the ABS case because of the [-MARK] specification of the latter. The motivation presented in Albizu (2002) for this hierarchical organization is strictly morphological: (i) their agreement markers are isomorphic and (ii) allocutives exhibit mixed ergativelike and dativelike morphological properties. Later, the

¹⁷ As formulated, our system predicts that the condition should operate the same on ditransitive predicates whenever a DAT goal argument cooccurs with a [+MARK] Theme-argument, that is, whenever the two internal arguments take [+MARK] cases. To the best of our knowledge, this prediction is borne out by the data. Consider the contrast in (i). In non-standard Basque, animate direct objects may be marked DAT (i.a). Interestingly, by adding a DAT goal argument to (i.a) we get the highly degraded sentence in (i.b); in this case, speakers either recover the ABS case-marking of the Theme-argument or change the DAT argument into a postpositional phrase: (We want to thank Itziar San Martin for her judgements.)

(i) a. (*)Martak Aneri eraman dio ikastolara
 Marta.E Ane.D take have.3SGD school.to
 'Marta has taken Ane to school'
 b. */?Martak Aneri amonari eraman dio
 Marta.E Ane.D doctor.D take have.3SGD
 'Marta has taken Ane to grandma'

Ormazabal & Romero (2001) note a similar contrast regarding the phenomenon of *leísmo* in Spanish. However, contrary to us, these two authors argue that the conflict has to do with animacy, not with case.

¹⁸ Alternatively, one could maintain that ABS case is underspecified and simply contains the root feature [CASE]. For the most part, this option would yield similar results to our proposal in (38). However, there is a difference. To the best of our knowledge, a detailed morphological analysis of the Basque inflectional verbal system requires one way or another a feature-specification of some sort to single ABS case from the other three. Of course, this requirement is not incompatible with the underspecification approach: that could just be included in the Morphological Component by means of a redundancy rule. But this pretty much takes us back to the characterization in (38).

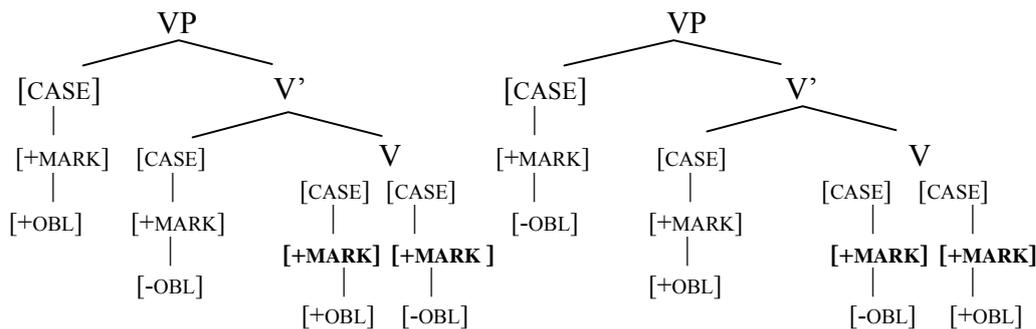
In addition, it seems to us that the morphological characterization in (38) could perhaps be refined by eliminating the root [CASE] feature altogether. This point is left for future research.

morphological connection between DAT and ERG cases has been corroborated by Fernández (2004), who on the basis of data from the Basque variety of Hondarrabia (cf. footnote (16)) has shown that the ability to trigger the insertion of the auxiliary **edun* is not exclusive to ERG and ALLO, but shared by DAT –that is, a property of the common feature [+MARK]. Now, if our analysis of the ERG-DAT clash is correct, we will also have syntactic evidence for a characterization along the lines of (38).

Obviously, given (38), the Distinctness Condition must be formulated as a strong non-identity requirement; that is, it must require a radical contrast between the two sets of case-specifications: they can share no other feature specification than the root [CASE] (cf. footnote (18)). Otherwise, the [±OBL] should be enough to discriminate ERGs from DATs and viceversa.

Keeping all these considerations in mind, we thus conclude that in our system all the unaccusative predicates that exceptionally display an ERG pattern end up with one of the two syntactic representations in (39). The representation in (39a) will correspond to those of the *gustatu* class (cf. (36a)); that in (39b), to those of the *hurbildu* class (cf. (36b)). In either cases, the content of V will violate the Distinctness Condition because of the double inclusion of the feature [+MARK]:

(39) a. *Gustatu* class: **iruditu (behar) dit* b. *Hurbildu* class: **hurbildu behar dit*



Absolutely marked unaccusative predicates, on the contrary, abide by the condition because of the negative value of the feature [±MARK(ed)]. In these constructions, the morphosyntactic content of V will include the specifications in (40), no matter the class of unaccusative predicate. Crucially, no conflict arises because distinctness is warrantee.

(40) V [(CASE,) -MARK] [(CASE, +MARK ,) +OBL]

7. Syntactic derivations

Another important aspect of our analysis are syntactic derivations. Our syntactic analysis will be built upon three main theoretical foundations: Etxepare's (2003) and Haddican's (2005) monoclausal analysis of *behar/nahi* constructions, Ortiz de Urbina's (1989) case-system, and Pesetsky and Torrego's (2004) view of Agree as a feature sharing operation.

7.1. A monoclausal analysis of *behar/nahi* restructuring sentences

To begin with, in this article we will follow Etxepare (2003) and Haddican's (2005) proposal that modal restructuring sentences are monoclausal.¹⁹ This revises the position we took in Albizu (2001b 2004) and Albizu and Fernández (2002), where these constructions were claimed to involve control by movement (Hornstein 1999 and San Martín 2000). By doing so, we get a better understanding of the transparency effects in section 3.1 (see Haddican 2005) and of some distinctive behavior regarding long-distance agreement (Etxepare 2003). By the same token, we avoid Hornstein's controversial theoretical proposal that NPs may receive multiple θ -roles.

In any event, it should be clear that the adequacy of our analysis does not depend on this point. Indeed, if we put this aspect aside, the syntactic structure and derivation assumed is basically the one in our previous works (cf. (21) in section 4): first, modals take a ν P/VP complement; second, the sentential subject is merged in the lower ν P/VP projection and later raises to the specifier of the modal. This is represented in (42):

$$(42) \left[\text{TP} \quad \text{T} \quad \left[\text{beharP} \quad \text{NP}_i \quad \text{behar/nahi} \quad \left[\text{\nu P/VP} \quad t_i \quad \nu/\text{V} \quad \right] \right] \right]$$

7.2. The case-system of Basque: Ortiz de Urbina (1989) updated

This article will abandon Laka's (1993 1995) Obligatory Case Parameter (cf. section 4) and will revive Ortiz de Urbina's (1989) case-system.²⁰ Adapting and updating Ortiz de Urbina's proposal, we will maintain that in Basque it is Tense (T), not V, the head that carries a valued Case-feature with both (di)transitive and unaccusative predicates; hence, transitive (ERG) and unaccusative (ERG/ABS) subjects all value their case-features with the same head, T, whereas transitive objects (ABS) value them with V. We add to this that DAT is an inherent case and agrees in situ with V.

As is well known, a system along these lines raises the problem of how to determine the Case-specification of T: when ERG, when ABS. Here we want to propose that the specific Case-value of T is a matter of syntactic selection: $T_{[ERG]}$ and $T_{[ABS]}$ have different selectional properties. In particular, $T_{[ERG]}$ selects either ν or a marked verbal head V_{lex} : ν is projected with (di)transitive predicates; V_{lex} is projected with ERG-marking unaccusatives (for instance, *iruditu*, *balio*, *merezi*, etc.) and with the 'opaque' case-patterns of *behar* and *nahi*. Moreover, ν and V_{lex} can be unified if we view ν as an additional instance of a lexically marked V_{lex} . This will give us the selection in (42a) for $T_{[ERG]}$. As for $T_{[ABS]}$, it simply has no selectional properties, it is the elsewhere case, as represented in (42b).²¹

¹⁹ We do not take a position as to whether 'transparent' *behar/nahi* constructions involve functional or lexical restructuring. See Haddican (2005) on this.

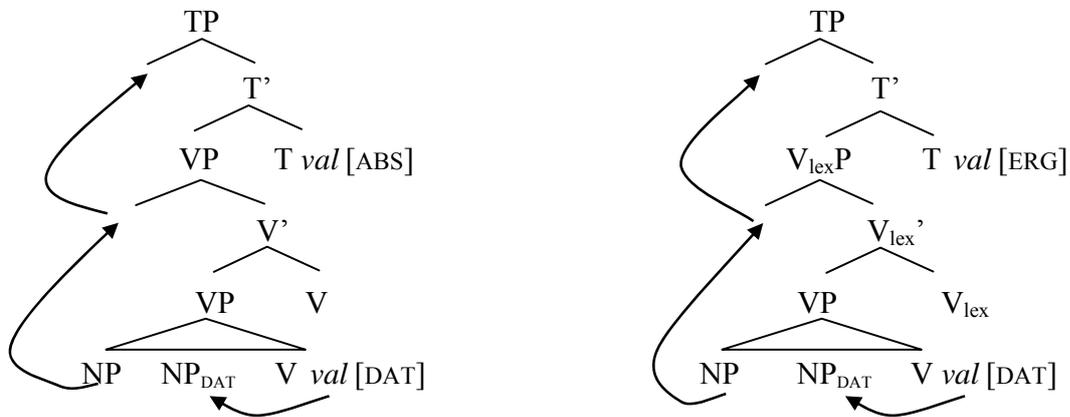
²⁰ The motivation for this is not only analysis-internal; it is also independently supported by arguments of a diverse nature: the syntactic accusativity of the language (Ortiz de Urbina 1989), subject-object asymmetries in the acquisition of verbal agreement markers (Ezeizabarrena 1995), the distribution of long-distance agreement (Etxepare 2003:197) and the scope of the omissions of verbal agreement morphology (Albizu 2001a). On the negative side, one might argue that Ortiz de Urbina's system breaks Laka's correlation between syntactic derivation and morphological realization. We can dismiss this counter-argument, however: the morphological facts can be derived very easily just by assuming that ABS ones are just elsewhere markers. We will not expand on all these aspects because of the lack of space.

²¹ Contrary to Ortiz de Urbina's, our proposal does not require the obligatoriness of ABS valuation (or ABS assignment).

- (42) a. (Di)Transitive & ERG unaccusative/modal: [TP T val[ERG] [VlexP Vlex ([v/VP v/V])]]
 b. ABS-marking unaccusatives and modals: [TP T val[ABS] ...]

This case-system will result in the two parallel syntactic derivations in (43). (43a) applies to ABS-assigning unaccusative verbs (*hurbildu da*) and ABS-assigning *behar/nahi* (*hurbildu behar da*). The intermediate VP corresponds to the modal, so it is only projected in these cases. In its turn, (43b) represents the syntactic derivation of (di)transitive predicates (*ekarri du/dit*), ERG-assigning unaccusative verbs (*urten du/dit*) and ERG-assigning *behar/nahi* (*hurbildu behar du/dit* and *urten behar du/dit*). Two remarks on (43b), just to avoid misinterpretations: first, ERG-assigning unaccusative verbs only project the highest verbal projection; second, (di)transitive predicates embedded under a modal will require the projection of a third one:

- (43) a. ABS unaccusatives and modals: b. (Di)Transitives, ERG unacc. and modals:²²



7.3. Agree as feature-sharing (Pesetsky & Torrego 2004)

Our syntactic analysis will also take advantage of Pesetsky & Torrego’s (2004) non-standard view of Agree as a feature-sharing operation. According to these authors, valuation of a feature F_2 by a feature F_1 creates a feature F , a single linguistic object, shared by two locations, so that there is a permanent connection between the feature F_2 that is valued and the feature F_1 that gives it value. As a result, the link between the two features is not lost after Agree, but is accessible to subsequent processes. This view contrasts to Chomsky’s (1998 1999) assignment version of Agree, where Agree is a valuation operation that operates on two distinct instances of a given feature F , two independent linguistic objects.

As Pesetsky & Torrego (2004) note, although the consequences of a feature sharing view of Agree do not differ for the most part from the consequences of Chomsky’s assignment version, there is one important respect in which the two views do differ. Suppose that an unvalued probe F_α agrees with an unvalued goal F_β . In Chomsky’s system, this operation is either vacuous or impossible. On the contrary, under the feature sharing approach, its output is a structure that

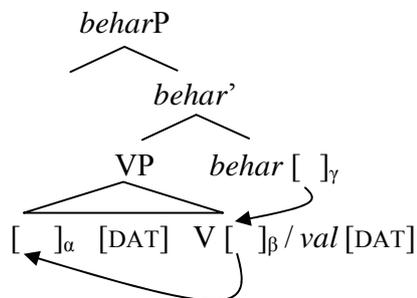
²² Examples like (31)-(32) with *balio* ‘be worth/be useful’ and *merezi* ‘be worth’, respectively, in which the clausal Theme-argument bears ABS despite the fact that the verb is typically ERG-assigner, also fall under this group. However, they require an ergatively-marked null expletive subject. ERG null expletive subjects have been independently proposed by Etxepare (2003:203, footnote (i)) to account for other parallel constructions.

contains only one occurrence of F with two unvalued instances. If a later operation of Agree applies between one of the instances of unvalued F just discussed and a distinct valued occurrence of F at location γ , the result will be a valued feature F present at three locations. Crucially, F has been valued at both of its previous locations α and β as a consequence of an application of Agree that involves only one of these locations.

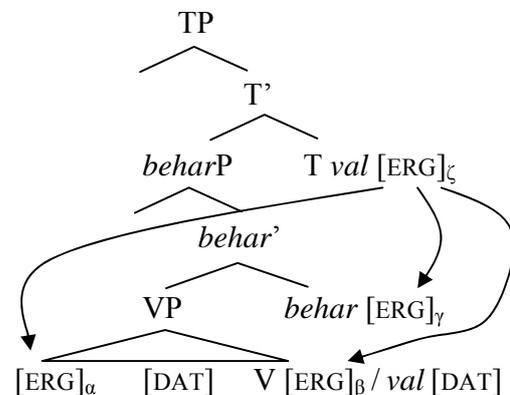
In this article we want to apply Pesetsky & Torrego's (2004) system to Basque in conjunction to our proposals in sections 7.1 and 7.2. Our main claim is that unaccusative V heads and modal and (di)transitive V_{lex} heads have no value for Case –of course, inherent [DAT] specifications are an exception– and, therefore, enter into an Agree relation with an argument unvalued for this same feature. This occurrence is later probed and valued by T, the locus of case according to Ortiz de Urbina's case-system.

For brevity's sake we limit our illustration in (44) to unaccusative predicates, the focus of our study. As shown in (44), in a first stage of the derivation the verbal head probes and agrees with the Theme-argument, which happens to be unvalued for case. When embedded in a restructuring construction, the occurrence of Case created in that first stage is probed by *behar* (V_{lex}), which is also unvalued, so giving an occurrence of Case at three locations. All three locations are valued at once in a last stage when the occurrence is probed by T. The specific value shared by T will depend on the selectional restrictions set in (42). Though (44) includes the [ERG] specification (cf. (43b)), the same representation is valid for its ABS counterpart (cf.(43a)): only the values of the Case-feature change.

(44) a. 1st & 2nd stages of the derivation:



b. 3rd stage of the derivation:



Finally, it is important to underline a distinctive second aspect of Pesetsky and Torrego's (2004) system. Interestingly, these authors dissociate interpretability and valuation, so that they allow two combinations of features not approved by Chomsky's: uninterpretable valued features and interpretable unvalued features. Yet, every interpretable feature must be valued before reaching the interfaces. This second aspect will become important in the next section.

8. Discriminating licit and illicit pairings: interpretability and deletion of [ERG]

As it stands, our analysis does not discriminate the licit ERG-DAT pairings in (27)-(34) from the illicit ones in (6)-(7) and (17): they all undergo parallel syntactic derivations and end up with

the same double [+Marked] specification on V. Therefore, they should all be ruled out in Basque by the Distinctness Condition.

The key to the problem is deletion. Following current minimalist assumptions (Chomsky 1998 1999), uninterpretable features must be valued and deleted before reaching the interfaces between the syntax and its neighboring interfaces. Under Pesetsky & Torrego's (2004) system, the mechanics are slightly different. The deletion operation does not target entire features, but only individual instances of a feature. This is so because every occurrence of a feature contains at least one interpretable valued instance that must remain accessible to the interfaces and, therefore, cannot be deleted. At any rate, deletion is sensitive to interpretability and not to valuation, so that only uninterpretable valued instances are eliminated.²³

In this article we now want to suggest that the licit and illicit ERG-DAT combinations under study differ as to how deletion applies to (44b). In our previous representations in section 7, we have refrained from being specific about the interpretability/uninterpretability of the different instances of the [ERG] feature. Now, this will become a central aspect of our proposal, because the interpretability of [ERG] will be distributed in different ways into the three/four instances of the feature.

At this point, a short clarification is convenient. Here, we will define an occurrence's (un)interpretability strictly from a PF-perspective and ignore the potential semantic aspects of Case. This will be left for further research. Hence, morphological realization will constitute our main argument for interpretability. In this respect, it seems uncontroversial that the [ERG]-feature on the verbal argument must be interpretable in all the examples.

In the case of V and T, we will argue that the two may contain or not contain the interpretable feature depending on the predicate. In particular, the lower lexical V carries an interpretable instance of [ERG] precisely in those predicates that trigger the clash, namely, in the ungrammatical **hurbildu behar dit* and **iruditu (behar) dit*. In its turn, T will support the interpretable instance just in the opposite cases, that is, in the grammatical *urten/balio (behar) dio* and Zaitegi's *lotu behar dio*.

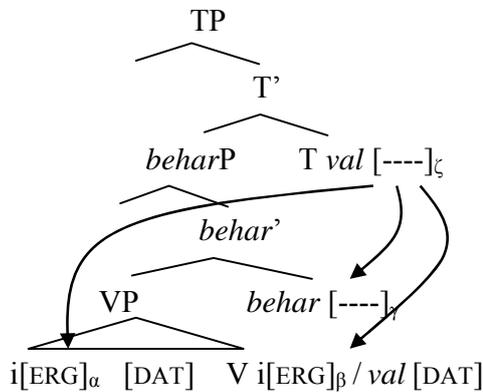
The reason for this distribution is not all that clear to us. Unfortunately, the morphological realization of case does not help us discerning between the two options because of the unreliable correlation between syntactic configuration and affix ordering (cf. displacement phenomena in Basque).²⁴ We suspect that two independent requirements are crossing in this phenomenon: on the one hand, there may be some connection between θ -roles and case that favors placing the interpretable specification in V; on the other hand, some independent connection between Tense and case (as argued, for instance, by Pesetsky & Torrego 2004) may be pressuring in favor of T. However, this is simply speculative.

Be that as it may, this system gives us the right results. The two relevant structures are presented in (45) and (46) below. The derivation in (45) corresponds to the ungrammatical case-patterns in the sentences **hurbildu behar dit* and **iruditu (behar) dit*. In (45), the interpretable valued features of the occurrence are at the lower V and at the ERG argument. Accordingly, the deletion operation 'oversees' them and deletes the specification(s) at T (and the intermediate V). Crucially, the two conflicting case-specifications in V survive to deletion, so that the Distinctness Condition will rule the derivation out when processed.

²³ See Pesetsky and Torrego (2004) for details on the theoretical motivations and implications of this proposal.

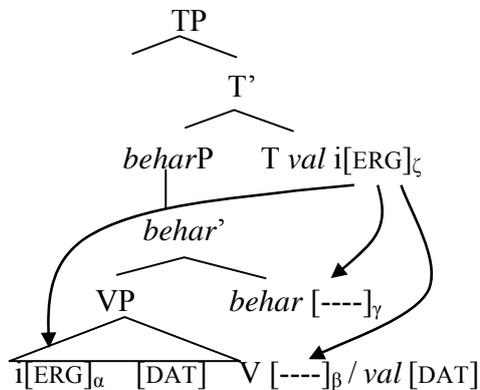
²⁴ There is an increasing literature on displacement phenomena in Basque. Check Fernández (2001) and Fernández & Albizu (2002) for references.

(45) Conflicting ERG-DAT pairings: syntactic representation after deletion



Compare it now to (46). In (46), the interpretable valued feature of V now has shifted to T, so that it is the specification(s) of V itself (and of the intermediate V) that are taken away. Unlike in the previous derivation, in (46) the content of (lower) V does satisfy the Distinctness Condition. The grammaticality of our grammatical *urten/balio (behar) dio* and *lotu behar dio* is thus accounted for.

(46) Non-conflicting ERG-DAT pairings: syntactic representation after deletion



9. Concluding remarks

This article has proposed a new analysis for some ERG-DAT clashes in Basque that we studied in previous works (Albizu 2001b 2004 and Albizu & Fernández 2002). The new account has broadened the corpus of data initially covered there and has overcome some serious deficiencies of those earlier systems. Two main aspects of our proposal are, on the one hand, the idea that there is a Distinctness Condition active in the language that requires that the two Case-values encoded by a head be distinct; on the other hand, the claim that ERG and DAT cases are morphologically alike and share the feature [+MARK], whereas ABS is morphologically distinct ([-MARK]). As we

see it, these two aspects seem worth exploring, for they put this seemingly idiosyncratic phenomenon in a more general context. For instance, the Distinctness Condition could be related to parallel conditions like phonology's Obligatory Contour Principle and be viewed as an interface condition related to interpretability. In the same vein, by resorting to the feature-based redefinition of cases we get a unified account for apparently independent syntactic and morphological properties of Basque.

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