

**THE SIZE OF THE SPELL-OUT DOMAIN:
CONTEXT-SENSITIVE ALLOMORPHY AND THE BASQUE “CASE PARADIGM”**

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The Basque locative singular morpheme remains unpronounced in certain contexts where it would be expected to appear. In these cases the definite article *-a* is absent as well. To my knowledge, the only theoretical approach to date has consisted in the postulation of inflectional paradigms. I analyse the phenomenon in terms of contextually conditioned allomorphy (Embick 2010). The absence of the cyclic node K(ase) in the absolutive case is identified as the crucial factor in ensuring that the PF cycle is large enough to provide the proper context for zero-insertion for both morphemes.

Locative and linker One context for the absence of the locative is the adnominalizing linker *-ko*. It can generally be used with the adverbial cases (1-a), including the locative (1-b). The definite singular form *-an* of the locative marker (possibly consisting of the article *-a* + loc. marker *-n*), however, cannot appear in the context of the linker. Instead the linker directly follows the noun, cf. (1-c) vs. (1-d).

- (1)
- a. mutil-a-ren-tza-ko opari-a
boy-DET.SG-GEN-BEN-KO present-DET
‘the present for the boy’
 - b. lantegi-eta-ko tximini-a-k
factory-LOC.PL-KO chimney-DET-PL
‘the chimneys in the factories’
 - c. *lantegi-an-(k/g)o tximini-a-k
factory-LOC.DEF.SG-KO chimney-DET-PL
 - d. lantegi-∅-ko tximini-a-k
‘the chimneys in the factory’

Locative “paradigm” De Rijk (2008) argues that there is a “locative case system” of Basque (2), distinguished from the “basic” one, for three main reasons: 1) The definite singular article *-a* is missing in what constitutes de Rijk’s locative system. 2) The markers *-tal-eta* in the indefinite and the definite plural are exclusive to the locative system. 3) The locative but not the basic system is sensitive to animacy. Animate nouns follow a special paradigm for the local cases involving what one might call a “proxy morpheme” *-gan* in order to carry the local case marking (*mutilarengandik* ‘to the boy’, allative).

(2) Local “cases” (adapted from Hualde & Ortiz de Urbina 2003:173, Table 59)

	INDEFINITE	DEFINITE			Translation
		SG	GENERAL PL	PROXIM. PL	
LOCATIVE	lekutan	lekuan	lekuetan	lekuotan	at/in a place
ABLATIVE	lekutatik	lekutik	lekuetatik	lekuotatik	from a place
ALLATIVE	lekutara	lekura	lekuetara	lekuotara	to a place
DIRECTIONAL	lekutarantz	lekurantz	lekuetarantz	lekuotarantz	towards a place
TERMINATIVE	lekutaraino	lekuraino	lekuetaraino	lekuotaraino	up to a place

It has been proposed that the structure of directional adpositions contains a locative projection (cf. the contributions in Cinque & Rizzi 2010). Under the assumption that the morpheme *-ta(n)* (final *-n* being subject to phonologically conditioned deletion) is actually an exponent of the locative (contra de Rijk 2008), the table in (2) shows a remarkable parallel to the behaviour of the locative with respect to the linker: while *-ta(n)* shows up in all other definiteness-number combinations of the local “cases”, it is absent throughout the definite singular paradigm.

Proposal Adopting the Distributed Morphology framework (Halle & Marantz 1993), I suggest a unified treatment of both phenomena observed above as resulting from regular structure building in conjunction with allomorphic alternations of the determiner and the locative morpheme.

In line with Eguzkitza (1993), the adverbial “cases” (i.e. all except absolutive, ergative, dative, genitive) are analyzed as postpositions. Moreover, I propose that they are exponents of functional heads (labelled *p*) in the extended nominal projection (*xnP*) of Basque (3) [# hosts number; K grammatical case; *p_{loc}* the locative; *p_{dir}* directional postpositions; C/Mod the linker *-ko* (cf. de Rijk 2008:ch. 5 for why it is not a case/postposition)]. I assume that Basque is right-headed.

(3) $[[[[[[[\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}\ n]_{nP} \#]_{\#P} D]_{DP} (K)]_{(KP)} p_{loc}]_{p_{loc}P} p_{dir}]_{p_{dir}} C/Mod]_{C/ModP}$

The p_{loc} - p_{dir} -structure captures the insight that directional adpositions select for locative projections (e.g. Cinque & Rizzi 2010), non-local postpositions only have a single p head. K is absent in the absolutive case (Arregi & Nevins 2012:ch. 2).

Against this background, both phenomena introduced above are analysed as follows. The sensitivity of the local “cases” to animacy is explained if p_{loc} is incompatible with a [+animate] feature. The proxy morpheme *-gan* starts a new (inanimate) xnP leading to the emergence of forms like *mutilarengandik* as described above. The absence of a locative marker and the determiner in singular directionals and with the linker is subject to the generalizations in (4).

- (4) a. Basque p_{loc} is overtly realized iff a) its complement does not have a singular feature or b) it is the highest head in the xnP .
 b. If p_{loc} is present, a singular determiner is silent.

These generalizations can be captured in terms of Embick’s (2010) C_1 -LIN theory under the following assumptions. D and # undergo Fusion, yielding a single head with definiteness and number features; the “indefinite” forms either lack # and D altogether, or receive a zero spell-out for them; K, but not D is a cyclic node for spell-out purposes (neither are p projections); and, crucially, the complement of p_{loc} is in the absolutive case, hence DP not KP. Then, the Vocabulary Items in (5) and (6) can account for the relevant data, cf. the sample derivation of *lekura* “to the place” in (7).

(5) $\# + D[\text{def}, \text{pl}] \leftrightarrow -e$

$\# + D[\text{def}] \leftrightarrow -\emptyset / _ \widehat{_} [\text{loc}]$

$\# + D[\text{def}] \leftrightarrow -a$

(6) $p_{loc} \leftrightarrow -n / [\text{sg}] \widehat{_} _]_{PF \text{ cycle}}$

$p_{loc} \leftrightarrow \emptyset / [\text{sg}] \widehat{_} _$

$p_{loc} \leftrightarrow -\text{tan}$

(7) *Fusion of # and D*: $\sqrt{\text{LEKU}} \widehat{_} (n) \widehat{_} (\# + D[\text{def}, \text{sg}]) \widehat{_} (p[\text{loc}]) \widehat{_} (p[\text{all}])$

Vocabulary Insertion (VI): $\sqrt{\text{LEKU}} \widehat{_} (n, \emptyset) \widehat{_} (\# + D[\text{def}, \text{sg}], \emptyset) \widehat{_} (p[\text{loc}], \emptyset) \widehat{_} (p[\text{all}], -ra)$

pruning (deletion of phonologically empty morphemes): $\sqrt{\text{LEKU}} \widehat{_} (p[\text{all}], -ra)$

spell-out: *lekura*

The absence of K in the absolutive is crucial in that it ensures that the $edge^+$ (hence spell-out) domain (Embick 2010) of the cyclic head n is large enough for the conditions on zero VI for #+D and p_{loc} to be licensed within one PF cycle. In other words, the presence of #+D, p_{loc} and p_{dir} (adjacently linearized) within the same PF cycle is what licenses the observed facts. The same holds for cases involving the linker (1-d), which would spell out C/Mod in the same PF cycle as #+D and p_{loc} . Such interactions between the spell-out of the determiner and a functional postposition are predicted to be unavailable when K is present, cf. e.g. the benefactive postposition in (1-a). It selects a genitive KP, the cyclic head K triggers spell-out of #+D before p, rendering impossible effects of p on the realization of #+D.

Conclusion The apparent paradigmatic distinction within the “adverbial case system” is analysed as a side-effect of idiosyncratic properties of individual nodes in the xnP . Under the assumption that absolutives lack KP, this can be captured as resulting from the spell-out of terminal nodes within the C_1 -LIN framework. To the extent that the present account is correct, it shows how certain structural configurations can increase the size of spell-out domains, while keeping in place rather restrictive locality conditions on potential interactions in the spell-out of terminal nodes.

References

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