Basque Light Verb Constructions

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Basque light verb constructions

The light verb construction (LVC) discussed here is of the type represented in (1), where the light verb (LV), that is a verb with little semantic content, is preceded by an element X with which it forms a complex verbal unit:

(1)   LVC
            / \
          X   V

X, the preverbal constituent in (1), may be an element belonging to a major lexical category as in (2):

(2)   a.   N + V   *negar egin* [tear + make] 'cry'
      b.   A + V   *on hartu* [good + take] 'accept'
      c.   P + V   *goiti egin* [up + make] 'vomit'

Although all the possibilities shown in (2) are attested in Basque, they are of unequal frequency. Types (2b) and (2c) are relatively rare and present a high degree of lexicalisation, while LVCs of type (2a) are far more common. The present study is concerned with the (2a) type, and in particular the subset in which the light verb is *egin* 'do, make',[1] the most common LV in Basque.[2]

In some languages (2a)-type constructions in which the nominal element corresponds to an object can represent more than one kind of formation, which may consist of a simple noun (N) or a more complex constituent; in Persian, for example, it may be an indefinite or definite determiner phrase (DP), the latter marked by *râ* as a specific object:

(3)   a.   [DP$_{def}$-*r*â] + LV
      b.   DP$_{ind}$ + LV
      c.   N + LV

Each of the possibilities in (3) is illustrated in (4):

(4)   a.   omid in   harf-hâ râ zad   (Samvelian 2001, (01))
           omid that word-Pl *râ* strike.PAS.3s
           'Omid said those things'

(4)   b.   omid in   harf-hâ-ye besyâr-i   zad   (Samvelian 2001, (02))
           omid that word-Pl-of   many-IND strike.PAS.3s
           'Omid said a lot of things'

(4)   c.   omid harf   zad   (Samvelian 2001, (03))
           omid word strike.PAS.3s

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[1] This is generally the verb with the greatest tendency to be used as a LV, not only in languages with few LVs, such as Japanese, but also in languages with numerous LVs, such as Romance languages (Alba-Salas 2003) and Persian (Karimi-Doostan 1997).

[2] The Basque dictionary *Euskal Hiztegia* (Sarasola 1996) contains approximately 180 sub-entries with the form N + *egin*. Over fifteen supplementary entries associate a noun determined by the article with *egin*. In a further thirty entries the preverbal element is either a postpositional form (an allative, inessive, ablative or instrumental case form or one containing the adverbial suffix *–ka*) or an adverb.

'Omid spoke'

In (4c) the plain form of the noun is used. Certain languages only allow some of the options seen here: Japanese, for example, only distinguishes between complements taking the accusative suffix and those not taking it. If the case marker is absent, there is obligatory incorporation of the plain noun as shown in (5a,b) and exemplified in (5c,d):

(5) a. DP_{accus} + LV
    b. N_{inc} + LV

    c. Mary-ga   John-to (kinoo)   kaiwa-o   sita
       Mary-NOM John-with yesterday conversation-ACC did
       'Mary spoke to John (yesterday)' (Saito & Hoshi 2000, (02))

    d. Mary-ga   John-to (kinoo)   kaiwa-sita   (Saito & Hoshi 2000, (03))
       Mary-NOM John-with yesterday conversation-did
       'Mary spoke to John (yesterday)'

In Basque DP objects are in the unmarked absolutive case. In LVCs, when the complement of the verb is a DP as in (6a) it is generally considered to be in the absolutive, whereas if the complement is a plain noun as in (6b) it is hard to say whether the same analysis remains available or it is preferable to assume incorporation of a noun complement as in the Japanese example (5d):

(6) a. Pellok barre galantak-Ø egin   ditu
       Peter.E laugh nice.Pl-A   make AUX
       'Peter had a good laugh'

(6) b. Pellok barre(-Ø) egin du
       Peter.E laugh(-A) make AUX
       'Peter laughed'

Consequently (6a) is analysed like (7a) below, with an absolutive DP as object, but (6b) can be analysed either like (7a) or as an incorporation if it is assumed that the absolutive case is not assigned to N (7b). The absence of case assignment is generally taken as a sign of incorporation, since this is compatible with the lack of case (Baker 1988):

(7) a. $[[\ _{DP}]\text{-}Ø\ _{ABS}]$ + LV
    b. N_{inc} + LV

Both analyses of (6b) are proposed in the relevant Basque linguistic literature. The incorporation analysis has been defended in particular by Uribe-Etxebarria (1989), Oyharçabal (1994) and Fernandez (1997), and the regular transitive analysis by Lafitte (1962), Levin (1983), and Ortiz de Urbina (1986); see also Hale & Keyser (1997) for a transitive analysis at the level of lexical syntax.

The syntactic arguments for the two viewpoints seem to be contradictory,[3] and this study proposes to show that Basque LVCs actually admit several structures. Thus, in addition to the two options mentioned above concerning the status of the nominal element (absolute DP or incorporated noun), we shall consider a third possibility advanced by Laka (1993) for Basque, and Karimi (1996) for Persian, and Massam (2001) for Niuean. In this structure LVCs have a transitive analysis with an important difference from ordinary constructions: instead of being assigned to a DP outside the VP by a functional head, Case is directly assigned by V to a NP within the VP. However, as we shall see, for many speakers this analysis does not exclude the possibility of also using incorporation structures. Thus overall and taking into account the language's different registers, we shall be forced to admit three structures available to speakers:

(8) a. [Lan gutxi]$_i$ egin$_j$ dugu [$_{VP}$ t$_i$ t$_j$]
        work little.A do.PF AUX
        'We haven't done much job'

(8) b. Gutxi$_k$ egin$_j$ dugu … t$_k$ [$_{VP}$ lan t$_j$]
        little   do.PF AUX   work
        'ditto'

(8) c. Gutxi$_k$ [lan$_j$ egin]$_j$ dugu … t$_k$ [$_{VP}$ t$_j$ [$_V$]$_j$]
        little   work do.PF AUX
        'ditto'

The discussion will develop as follows. First of all we shall look at various syntactic arguments favouring the position that N in Basque LVCs, here referred to noncommittally as preverbal nouns (PVN), possess the same syntactic properties as objects of ordinary transitive constructions, rather than those of incorporated nouns (§1). We shall then refer to the main arguments that suggest, on the contrary, that PVNs in LVCs cannot be considered ordinary objects, but will show that the analysis of PVNs as NPs can deal with these without necessarily relying on an incorporation analysis (§2). In the third section we will refute some arguments (lack of an adjective, impersonal constructions, referential opacity) opposing the analysis supported here (§3), while in the last section we will discuss phenomena (raising with V under focalisation, quantification) which demonstrate that incorporation is another option available for many speakers as an alternative to that already proposed.

§1. PVNs as ordinary object phrases.

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[3] Rodriguez & García Murga (2003) propose a mainly semantic analysis of LVCs, pointing out that their meanings are non-compositional and concluding that they therefore constitute idioms. They emphasise the contradictory nature of the syntactic data and do not opt for one or another of the options in (7a,b). I find the lexicalist analysis generally associated with idioms unsatisfactory for most Basque LVCs, which are largely transparent and possess a prototypical syntactic structure (Hale & Keyser 1993, 2002), particularly for N+*egin* type LVs (eventhough there are some well known exceptions, such as *alde egin* 'go away' a typical case of PVN incorporation). Rodriguez & García Murga's (2003) observations which note rightly that LVCs function as semantic units are better accommodated in non-lexicalist theoretical frameworks such as Halle & Marantz's (1993) *Distributed Morphology* or Borer (2003), but the issue exceeds the scope of this article.

A number of arguments in the literature suggest that PVNs have syntactic properties similar to ordinary object DPs (as opposed to incorporated objects): the constraint against double objects (§1.1.), separation of PVNs and LVs in questions and focalisation (§1.2), use of the partitive (§1.3.), use of quantifiers (§1.4.), and verb ellipsis in contrastive focalisation (§1.5).

1.1. The lack of a second absolutive object.

It is well established that Basque does not permit two absolutive DPs in the same sentence.[4] Therefore, if PVNs are syntactic objects in the absolutive case, no other absolutive DP may occur. The PVN fills the object position associated with the LV's thematic argument and a double object is impossible. This is shown by the following examples:

(9)   a.   Pellok garai berriez   amets egin   du
          Peter.E time new.DETpl.INS dream make.PF AUX
          'Peter dream of new times'

 (9)   b.   *Pellok garai berriak   amets egin   ditu
           Peter.E time   new.DETpl.A dream make.PF AUX
           'Peter dreamt of new times'

In (9a) the LVC does not have an absolutive object DP and the sentence is well-formed. In (9b), on the contrary, use of a 'second' (absolutive) object besides the PVN results in an ill-formed sentence.

Notice that the example is made all the more significant by the fact that if the N *amets* 'dream' occurs in a derived denominal verb, the alternation becomes possible:[5]

(9)   c.   Pellok garai berriak   amestu   ditu
          Peter.E time new.DETpl.A dream.PF AUX
          'Peter dreamt of new times'

Thus there is a clear contrast between the derived denominal incorporating verb represented in (10b) and the corresponding LVC in (10a):

(10) a.   VP   (10) b.   VP
            / \   / \
        *DP   LVC   DP   V
          / \   / \
         N   V t_i V
       amets   egin   [*amets$_i$-Ø*]

LVCs admitting two DP objects such as *huts egin* 'miss, lit. empty make' are rare and constitute lexical exceptions.[6]

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[4] This doesn't apply to predicative DPs and adverbial DPs lacking postpositional or adverbial morphology (usually with temporal value).

[5] The impossibility of double objects is restricted to DPs. Sentential complements may be available as in the following example:

(i)   a.   *Pellok garai berriak   datozela   amets egin   du*
          Peter.E time   new.DETpl.A come.3pl.A. COMP dream make.PF AUX
          'Peter dreamt that new times were coming.'

[6] *Huts egin* can be used transitively, at least in eastern dialects:

(i)   Pellok azken bi bilkurak   huts egin   ditu
          Peter.E last   two meeting.DET.A empty make.PF AUX

1.2. Separation of PVN and LV when V is raised in questions and under focalisation.

An incorporation analysis leads us to expect the PVN to stay with the verb when V is moved. In Basque such movements typically occur in questions and under focalisation. In fact, when these movements occur PVNs do not necessarily move with V, from which they can be separated like ordinary objects. Consider the following two examples, where (11a) contains an ordinary transitive verb and (11b) a LVC:

(11) a.   Non [erosi   duzu]$_i$ haragia   t$_i$?
           where buy.PF AUX   meat.DET.A
           'Where did you buy the meat?'

(11) b.   Non [egin   duzu]$_i$ lo   t$_i$?
           where make.PF AUX sleep
           'Where did you sleep?'

Here V is raised to COMP, leaving behind the object DP in (11a) and the PVN in (11b) in a position lower than T. There is no distinction here between the PVN and the object DP. The same is found with focalisation, as in (12):

(12) a.   Merke [erosi   dut]$_i$ haragia   t$_i$
            cheap   buy.PF AUX meat.DET.A
           'I bought the meat cheap'

(12) b.   Oso ondo [egin   dut]$_i$ lo   t$_i$
           very well   make.PF AUX sleep
           'I slept very well'

As these examples show, when V is raised the PVN acts like an ordinary object, rather than following the movement of V as would be expected if it were an incorporated nominal (cf. §4.1.).

1.3. Partitive use in negative sentences.

Another feature of absolute DPs is use of the partitive in negative polarity contexts (such as negation, questions, conditions etc.) in the absence of another quantifier or determiner:

(13) a.   *Ez   dut   haragi   jan
             NEG AUX meat.IND.A eat.PF
           'I didn't eat meat'

(13) b.   Ez   dut   haragirik   jan
           NEG AUX meat.PART eat.PF
           'I didn't eat (any) meat'

(13a) is ill-formed, unlike (13b), because an absolutive indefinite DP must take the partitive suffix under negation. Even though, as we shall see below (2.1. (20)), the contrast in (13a,b) is not exactly paralleled in LVCs, the fact remains that PVNs may take a partitive suffix in similar conditions to ordinary object DPs (13c,d):

(13) c.   Ez   dut   lorik   egin

'Peter missed the last two meetings'

NEG AUX sleep.PART make.PF
'I didn't sleep'

(13) d.   Ez   oihurik   egin!
NEG shout.PART make
'Don't shout!'

1.4. Use of quantifiers in LVCs.

In transitive sentences containing an incremental-theme verb (Dowty 1991) quantification applies only to object DPs whenever these are present syntactically. Therefore (14a) is ungrammatical, unlike (14b):

(14) a.   *Gehiegi   [udareak]   jan   ditut
too-much/many pear(ARTpl).A eat.PF AUX
'I ate pears too much'

(14) b.   [Udare gehiegi]   jan   dut
pear too-many.IND.A eat.PF AUX
'I ate too many pears'

Jan 'eat' is a transitive incremental theme verb. The quantifier *gehiegi* 'too much, too many' is placed outside the object DP in (14a), in a position higher than the VP. This sentence is ill-formed. As an internal constituent of DP, *gehiegi* occurs to the right of the head noun as in (14b). The same pattern is found with a quantifier like *gutxi* 'little, few' (14c,d):

(14) c.   [Haragi gutxi] jan   dut
meat little   eat.PF AUX
'I didn't eat much meat'

(14) d   *Gutxi [haragia] jan   dut
little   meat.A   eat.PF AUX
'I didn't eat meat much'

With LVCs whose PVNs are incremental themes, quantification of the object PVN occurs as in (14b,c), showing that these may correspond to DP type syntactic structures (but see 4.2 below):

(15a)   [Lo   gutxi] egin   dut
sleep little   make.PF AUX
'I didn't sleep much'

(15b)   [Lan gehiegi]   egin   dut
work too-much/many do.PF AUX
'I worked too much'

1.5. Verbal ellipsis in negative contrastive focus

When an object DP is negated under contrastive focus, there is ellipsis of the verb and the sentence is reduced to the focused DP following the negator:

(16) a   Haragia   jan   dut, ez   ogia
meat.DET.A eat.PF AUX NEG bread.DET.A

'I ate meat, not bread'

The same occurs with PVNs:
(16) b.   Lan egin   dut, ez   lo
           work make.PF AUX NEG sleep
           'I worked, not slept'('I made work, not sleep')

(16) c.   Irri   egin   dut, ez oihu
           laughter make.PF AUX NEG shout
           'I laughed, not shouted' ('I made laughter, not shout')

Notice that this kind of ellipsis is not possible with contrasting constituents in the case of objects syntactically incorporated into nominalised sentences. Thus (17a) is ill-formed, as opposed to (17b) where the constituent (*liburuak* is an ordinary DP) contrasts with the incorporated object (*diru* 'money') in the preceding nominalised phrase:
(17) a.   *Diru biltzen   hasi   naiz, ez   liburu
           money collect.NOM.IN start.PF AUX NEG book
           'I started money-collecting, not book'

(17) b.   *Diru biltzen   hasi   naiz, ez   liburuak*
           money collect.NOM.IN start.PF AUX NEG book.DETpl.A
           'I started money-collecting, not books'

The above observations clearly suggest that PVNs have the same properties as ordinary object DPs rather than the properties we would expect if they were incorporated nouns. In the next section, we shall look at some arguments suggesting that the properties of PVNs are not the same as those of ordinary object DPs.

§2. Specific syntactic properties of PVNs.

Here we will examine two arguments that seem to be directly opposed to an analysis of PVNs as ordinary object DPs. One has to do with the absence of a determiner in PVNs (§2.1.); the other with the placement of PVNs in relation to manner adverbs (§2.2.). At the end of the section we shall see that an analysis of PVNs as NPs inside VP also allows us to explain these facts (§2.3.).

2.1. The lack of a determiner on PVNs.

The first difference between PVNs and ordinary object DPs is that PVNs are normally in the undetermined base form, which is not possible with ordinary objects. The following examples show a clear contrast:
(18) a.   *Sagar jan   dut
           apple eat.PF AUX
           'I ate apple'

(18) b.   Lo egin   dut
           sleep make.PF AUX
           'I slept'

As (18a) shows, other than with LVCs an object reduced to a plain noun with a transitive verb is ungrammatical. In negative sentences the same is true: except with LVCs (20), the partitive is obligatory (19a,b):

(19) a.   *Ez   dut   etxe   egin
           NEG AUX house make.PF
           'I didn't build a/any house'

(19) b.   Ez   dut   etxerik   egin
           NEG AUX house.PART make.PF
           'I didn't build a/any house'

(20)   Ez   dut   lo   egin
           NEG AUX sleep make.PF
           'I didn't sleep'

Contrary to (19) where *egin* is a heavy verb and partitive assigment obligatory, (20) with no partitive on the $_{PV}$N is grammatical because, although as we saw above (§1.3. (13)) the partitive is possible in LVCs, it is not obligatory.

2.2. Placement of $_{PV}$N in relation to manner adverbs.

In ordinary transitive sentences with SOV order, it is unusual for manner adverbs (ADV$_{man}$) such as *ongi* 'well' and *gaizki* 'badly' to occur between S and O; the unmarked order is S-O-ADV$_{man}$, as illustrated by the following examples:

(21) a.   Pellok zure lana   ongi egin   du
           Peter.E your work DET.A well do.PF AUX
           'Peter did your work well'

(22) b.   *Pellok ongi zure lana   egin   du
           Peter.E well your work.DET.A do.PF AUX
           'Peter did well your work'

With LVCs the opposite is the case, and the unmarked order is S-ADV$_{man}$- $_{PV}$N:

(23) a.   Pellok ongi lan   egin   du
           Peter.E well work do.PF AUX
           'Peter worked well'

(24) b.   ?Pellok lan   ongi egin   du
           Peter.E work well do.PF AUX
           'Peter worked well'

With LVCs the S-$_{PV}$N-ADV$_{man}$ is marked, and is only possible through left-dislocation of the $_{PV}$N. This clearly contrasts with absolute DPs.

2.3. Analysis of $_{PV}$Ns as NPs with inherent case assigned by V.

The data presented so far appears contradictory, since it offers evidence of both similarities and divergences between object DPs and $_{PV}$Ns. Laka (1993) proposes an analysis of Basque transitive sentences that accounts for these apparently contradictory facts by distinguishing between ordinary DPs, where the object is obligatorily raised out of the VP to Specifier of a functional head with specification of D features, and NPs

where raising out of VP does not occur owing to the absence of D. In the first instance Case is assigned to the object DP by the functional head allowing D features to be specified. In the second, Case is assigned to the object NP directly by V within VP (cf. Karimi 1996 for Persian and Nassam 2001 for Niuean). This analysis explains well the obligatory absence of a determiner with PVNs, and also the possibility of the absence of the partitive in contexts where this would normally be required, as well as the placement of ADV$_{man}$ to the left of LVCs in the position which Laka treats as a VP adjunct. Laka also predicts that since ordinary object DPs and PVNs occupy syntactic positions at different levels in the syntax, coordination between object DPs or between PVNs should be possible, but coordination between a DP and a PVN should not be. This prediction is difficult to test yet holds true nonetheless:[7]

(25)   Ohea   eta eskolako   lanak   egin   ditut
         bed.DET.A and school.DET.IN.ADN work.DETpl.A do.PF AUX
         'I made the bed and [did] the homework'

(26)   Ele   eta lan   egin   dut
         conversation and work do.PF AUX
         'I chatted and worked'

(27)   *[ele   eta eskolako   lanak]   egin   ditut
           conversation and school.DET.IN.ADN work.DETpl.A do.PF AUX
         'I chatted and did the homework'

     (25) shows that two object DPs may be coordinated, and (26) shows that so can two PVNs. (27) shows, on the contrary, that a PVN object and a DP object cannot be coordinated. This makes sense in terms of Laka's (1993) analysis since DPs and PVNs occupy different positions in her view, with case assignment in the former instance occurring in a DP from a functional head outside VP, and in the latter on a NP from V inside VP.

§3. Refutation of arguments against the analysis of PVNs as NPs.
     Several arguments can be made against analysing PVNs as NPs. As we shall see, some of these, such as the argument concerning the impossibility of an adjective inside PVNs (§3.1), can be refuted. Others can be explained in the framework of the analysis proposed, in particular the apparent violation of the rule forbidding two absolutives in the case of impersonal sentences (§3.2), and the lack of referential transparency of PVNs (§3.3.).

3.1. The lack of plain adjectives in LVCs.
     In the classical analysis of Basque DPs, NPs consist of phrase constituents without a determiner. According to this approach, modifiers of N heads are internal NP constituents (Goenaga 1980). Thus treating PVNs as NPs predicts well-formed phrasal LVCs containing an adjective modifier. However, this is not so other than in occasional exceptions constituted by certain set phrases,[8] as the following examples show:
(28) a. *Lo   egin   duzu*

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[7] It is difficult to judge the grammaticality of (27) because a bisentential reading is possible with ellipsis of the verb of the first sentence. It is ungrammatical without a pause after the PVN.

[8] Such as *fin gaizto egin* and *leher gaizto egin* 'come to a bad end'.

sleep make.PF AUX
'You slept'

(28) b. *Lo ederra egin duzu*
      sleep fine DET.A do.PF AUX
      'You slept well'

(28) c. **Lo eder egin duzu*
      sleep fine   do.PF AUX
      'You slept well'

As (28) shows, the LVC *lo egin* 'sleep' permits the use of the adjective *eder* 'fine', but in that case the phrase must have a determiner (28b). In the absence of a determiner, the presence of the adjective is ungrammatical (28c). Does this fact contradict the analysis of ₚᵥNs as NPs? It does if modifiers of N (adjectives or adnominal complements) are treated as internal NP constituents as in (30) et (31).

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(30)        NP                (31)        DP
            / \                           / \
          N'   D                        NP    D
          / \                           / \
        N    A                        N    A
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(30) is the structure proposed by Trask (1984) and Goenaga (1991), among others. (31) represents a restatement of the same analysis in the framework of the DP theory (cf. Artiagoitia 2002). If ₚᵥNs are NPs and adjectives are NP constituents, the ungrammaticality of (28c) is hard to explain. But as a matter of fact the analysis of NPs shown in (30) has been contested independently of the LVC issue.

Thus Artiagoitia (1998, 2002) observes that the presence of an adjective with a proper noun entails the obligatory use of the article with the adjective, as opposed to its absence when the proper noun stands on its own:

(32) a. *Parisen bizi naiz*
      Paris.IN living be.1A
      'I live in Paris'

(32) b. *Paris ederrean bizi naiz*
      Paris beautiful.DETsg.IN living be.1A
      'I live in beautiful Paris'

(32) c. **Paris ederre(ta)n bizi naiz*
      Paris beautiful.(IND).IN living be.1A
      'I live in beautiful Paris'

To account for this, Artiagoitia proposes considering APs to be complements of D (cf. Abney 1987 (381)). DPs would thus have the following structure:

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(33)        DP
            / \
          AP    D
          / \
        NP    A
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The argument goes as follows. Proper nouns with the features [+sg] and [+refential] must be raised to D (i.e. at LF in Basque). But in a structure such as (33) the adjective blocks the movement of the NP head to the D head.

The treatment of adjectives within DPs remains a debated issue (cf. the proposal for a serial chain according to an unmarked hierarchy in Cinque 1994, Giusti 2002, Scott 2002), but in any case an analysis like (30-31) would appear to be inadequate. If adjectives are analysed as external constituents of the NP, the ungrammaticality of (29c) is not an obstacle for the analysis of PVNs as NPs.

3.2. Impersonal constructions.

According to Laka's (1993) analysis of PVNs, absolutive case is assigned by V within VP. It is interesting to see how LVCs pattern in impersonal passive sentences, given that from the impossibility of having two absolutive DPs the analysis predicts that either the PVN will be raised to subject position like ordinary DPs or else such sentences will be impossible. Let us see whether this is the case. Consider the following two sentences, where the index on the auxiliary signals agreement, and the manner adverb the VP's leftmost boundary:

(34) a.   *Garai hartan   liburuak$_i$ goraki   t$_i$ irakurtzen ziren$_i$*
            time   3DEM.IN book.DET.Pl.A out-loud   read.IMP   AUX.3plA
            'At that time books were read out loud'

(34) b.   ??*Garai hartan   lan$_i$ garbiki* t$_i$ *egiten   zen$_i$*
             time   3DEM.IN work.A cleanly   do.IMP AUX.3sgA
            'At that time one worked cleanly'

There is a clear contrast between the two examples: a PVN, unlike an ordinary object DP, cannot rise to subject position. Now consider the following example where the PVN remains inside the VP preceding the LV, the subject position being occupied by an empty expletive pronoun:

(34) c.   *Garai hartan*   pro$_{exp}$ *garbiki lan   egiten   zen*
            time   3DEM.IN pro.A   cleanly   work do.IMP AUX.3sgA
            'At that time one worked cleanly'

This is grammatical, but if (34c) represents the structure of impersonal sentences, this raises the question of the expletive pronoun in subject position. Since this can only be absolutive (Ortiz de Urbina 1989), doubt is cast on the analysis of the PVN itself as an absolutive NP, given the impossibility of two absolutives. Does this disprove the proposed analysis? Not necessarily, if we do not recognise equal status for the absolutive case of ordinary objects and the inherent case of NPs, as proposed for double accusative constructions in Japanese (Miyamoto 1999: 143).

The main stumbling block faced by this solution is the ungrammaticality of (9b), repeated here as (35):

(35)   **Pellok garai berriak*   amets egin   ditu*
              Peter.E time   new.DETpl.A dream make.PF AUX
              'Peter dreamt of new times'

If the PVN *amets* 'dream' gets inherent case from V, and if this is compatible with the presence of a DP-assigned structural Case, why is (35) ungrammatical? The answer lies in the assignment of thematic roles. Basque PVNs, unlike those in Japanese, have no

theta-role to transfer, and the PVN, which receives inherent case, likewise occupies the role of theme (unlike incorporation in denominal verbs). Therefore (35) is ungrammatical simply because the object DP doesn't have a thematic role. In impersonal sentences the situation is different. Here the assignment of absolutive case affects the expletive subject, and this doesn't have a thematic role so no ungrammaticality ensues. Thus (35) is not an obstacle for the analysis of impersonal sentences. That is why we have adopted here an analysis of impersonal sentences allowing for compatibility between the assignment of inherent case in the NP and structural absolutive case in the subject expletive pronoun.

3.3. Referential opacity of PVNs.

One characteristic of PVNs is that they can possess referential opacity (Anderson 2000). Consider the following examples:

(36) a. Musika$_i$ entzun zuen. pro$_i$ Ezti-eztia   zen.
         music.DET.A hear   AUX   sweet sweet.DET be.PAS
         'He heard the music. It was very pretty'

(36) b. Lo$_i$ egin nuen. *pro$_i$ Gozo-gozoa   zen.
         sleep.DET.A make AUX   nice nice.DET be.PAS
         'I slept. It [i.e. my sleep] was very nice'

In (36a) the empty pronoun of the second sentence refers to the object of the preceding sentence. In (36b), the empty pronoun refers to the PVN *lo* 'sleep'.[9] The contrast is clear with incorporation of plain objects in nominalised sentences that are referentially transparent (37a,b) and PVNs for which no pronominal anaphora is possible, cf. (38) comparable to (36b) :

(37) a. Han etxe$_i$ egiten   hasi dira. pro$_i$ Ez   zaizkit gustatzen.
         there house make.NOM begin AUX.   NEG AUX   like.IMP
         'They've started building there. I don't like them [i.e. the houses]'

(37) b. Liburu$_i$ banatzen   hasi zara. pro$_i$ Zertaz   dira?
         book   distribute.NOM start AUX.   what.INS be.PR
         'You've started giving out books (book-distributing). What are they about?'

(38)   Barda   amets$_i$ egin dut. *pro$_i$ Ez   za(izk)it gustatu.
         last-night dream make AUX   NEG AUX   like.PF
         'I dreamt last night. I didn't like them [i.e. the dreams]'

Does this fact cast doubt on the presence of a NP constituent in object position in LVCs? It does if NPs are constituents with the feature [+referential], since this feature ought to permit referential transparency. But in the framework of the DP theory that feature is specified in D (Longobardi 1994). But PVNs are semantically characterised by a double feature of nonspecificity and nonreferentiality; cf. Borer (1994). In this framework, then,

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[9] If pro refers to the whole sentence the sentence is grammatical. In this case, a demonstrative can be used to refer to the whole sentence (not to the $_{PN}$V).
(i)   Lan   egin dut. Horrekakitu nau.
       work make AUX that.E tire   AUX
       'I worked. That made me tired'

the referential opacity of PVNs, far from being a counter-argument to the NP analysis, actually supports it.

§4. Incorporated PVNs.

The analysis so far has established the syntactic complexity LVCs. In this final section I shall show that this does not imply, nevertheless, the exclusion of incorporating structures. The facts vary according to dialect, speakers and the LVCs concerned, but for many speakers (at least in the case of central and eastern dialects) a variety of structures are available for numerous LVCs.

4.1. Raising of the PVN together with V in questions and under focalisation.

We have seen (§1.2. (11-12)) that in questions and under focalisation a PVN may be separated from the LV and placed to its right when the LV has been raised to COMP. With ordinary DPs this splitting is fully obligatory, as is shown by the ungrammaticality of (39) :

(39) a.   *Nork etxea$_i$ egin$_j$ du   han   t$_i$ t$_j$?
        who.E house.DET.A make.PF AUX over-there
        'Who built the house over there?'

(39) b.   *Norekin etxea$_i$ egin$_j$ du   Pellok t$_i$ t$_j$?
        who.SOC house.DET.A make.PF AUX Peter.E
        'With whom did Peter build the house?'

(39) c.   *Arras ongi baratzeko   lanak   egiten ditut
        very   well garden.DET.IN.ADN work.DETpl.A do.IMP AUX
        'I did the gardening very well'

With LVCs it is much easier to raise the PVN together with the verb in questions (40a,b) and under focalisation (40c) :

(40) a.   Nork lo   egin   du   ohe horretan?
        who.E sleep make.PF AUX bed 2DEM.IN
        'Who slept in that bed?'

(40) b.   Norekin lan   egiten du   Pellok ?
        who.SOC work do.IMP AUX Peter.E
        'With whom did Peter work?'

(40) c.   Orain arras ongi lan   egiten   dut
        now   very   well work faire.IMP AUX
        'Now I work very well'

The examples in (40) are incompatible with an analysis of PVNs as NPs remaining in a VP-internal position. As can be seen, the PVN accompanies V when this is raised to COMP, so the LVC is acting as a lexical unit, with incorporation of the PVN following the standard pattern for this kind of structure (10a).

This phenomenon varies considerably according to idiolect and specific LVCs. In general it appears that eastern dialects, especially for younger speakers, have no trouble, and even prefer forming questions (or focalisations) like those in (40), whose form implies incorporation for these speakers. In the central and western dialects, on the other

hand, there appear to be more restraints on this option. Nevertheless the pattern is seen for a LVC like *hitz egin* 'speak', in which the incorporation option prevails so that even in central dialects the preferred usage in questions and under focalisation is that of (41):[10]

(41) a. Zertaz hitz egin du Pellok ?
          what.INS word do.PF AUX Peter.E
          'What did Peter speak about?'

(41) b. ??Zertaz egin du Pellok hitz ?
            what.INS do.PF AUX Peter.E word
          'ditto'

(41) c. Oso ondo hitz egin du Pellok
          very well   word do.PF AUX Peter.E
          'Peter spoke very well'

(41) d. ??Oso ondo egin du Pellok hitz
            very well do.PF AUX Peter.E word
          'ditto'

Between the two options in (41a,b) and (41c,d) the one without splitting of the LVC is the more frequent, while the other is definitely more marked. Therefore it seems that the incorporation process observed for *hitz egin* is also predominating in the dialects concerned for other LVCs such as *lo egin* 'sleep', *lan egin* 'work', *irri egin* 'laugh', etc., although this has not led to the blocking of alternative patterns.

This hypothesis is confirmed by the data for the use of quantifiers such as *gutxi* 'little' or *gehiegi* 'too much/many'.

4.2. *Gutxi*-type quantifiers in LVCs.

As was indicated in §1.4., within DPs a quantifier like *gutxi* 'little' should be placed to the right of N. However, it can also be used adverbially to quantify verbs in objectless structures as in (42):

(42)   Pellok gutxi jan   / sufritu   du

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[10] I have observed a tendency among some speakers of the Gipuzkoan dialect to avoid the NP treatment, at least with some LVCs, in oral usage:

(i)   Ez   dezu ondo lan   egiten   ($_{PV}$N=N$_{inc}$)
       NEG AUX well   work do.IMP
       'You don't work well'

(ii)   Ez dezu ondo egiten lana   or *Lana   ez dezu ondo egiten* ($_{PV}$N=DP)
                  do.IMP work.DET.A   work.DET.A   do.IMP
       'ditto'

(iii) ??Ez   dezu ondo egiten lan or ??Lan ez   dezu ondo egiten (PVN=NP)
                  do.IMP work   work   do.IMP
       'ditto'

(iv)   Par   gutxi egin det ($_{PV}$N=DP)
       laughter little do.PF AUX
       'I didn't laugh much'

(v)   Gutxi par egin det ($_{PV}$N=Ninc)
       'ditto'

(vi)   ??Gutxi egin det par ($_{PV}$N=NP)
       'ditto'

14

Peter.E little eat.PF   suffer.PF AUX
'Peter ate/suffered little'

In (42) *gutxi* 'little' is used with a verb (*jan* 'eat') with an omitted ordinary object (unspecified object deletion) and an intransitive verb (*sufritu* 'suffer'). Both sentences are well-formed. As we saw earlier, in transitive sentences with an incremental theme verb quantifiers of this type obligatorily affect the object and thus appear inside the absolutive DP, to the right of the noun they quantify, as in (43):

(43)   Pellok [sagar gutxi]   jan   du
            Peter.E apple little/few-A eat.PF AUX
            'Peter ate few apples'

If these modifiers appear to the left of the noun they cannot belong to the DP and so act as quantifiers of the VP, either preceding the VP directly or separated from it if raised to focal position. In either case this results in ungrammaticality, with or without a determiner in the object DP:

(44a)   *Pellok   gutxi ur(a)   edan   du
             Peter.E little water(.DET).A drink.PF AUX
            'Peter has drunk water little'

(44b)   *Pellok gutxi edan$_i$ du   ur(a)
             Peter.E little drink.PF AUX water(.DET).A
            'Peter has drunk little water'

With LVCs the facts differ. Generally LVCs are quantified by associating the quantifier with the $_{PV}$N, as we saw above in 1.4.:

(45)   Lo   gutxi egin   duzu
            sleep little do.PF AUX
            'You have slept little'

However, (45) is not the only possibility: with some variation according to dialect and idiolect, other orders are also possible. For example, for many speakers LVCs permit focalisation of just the quantifier, in which case it is separated from N as in (46a). Some speakers also accept raising N with V as in (46b). Preferences between these possibilities may be idiolectal:

(46) a.   Gutxi$_j$ egin$_i$ duzu t$_j$ [lo   t$_i$ $_{VP}$]
            little   make.PF AUX   sleep
            'You slept little'

(46) b.   Gutxi [lo   egin]$_i$ duzu t$_i$
            little   sleep make.PF AUX
            'You slept little'

The two options have different consequences for the analysis of $_{PV}$N as a NP. In the first instance (46a) the analysis can be maintained. *Lo* remains internal to VP, and *gutxi* 'little' is inserted in a higher position above VP. This does not result in ungrammaticality. In (46b) *gutxi* can no longer be a quantifier of the noun and extracted from DP, and the only possible analysis is that in which the $_{PV}$N has been incorporated so that quantification is achieved as if *lo egin* were a simple intransitive verb.

While the usage with quantifiers as modifiers of the _{PV}N is the most usual one, many eastern speakers prefer the adverbial quantifier usage of (46b), implying that for these speakers the incorporation option is available with LVCs. This is also what we find for speakers of central dialects with *hitz egin*:

(47) a. Pellok   gutxi / gehiegi   hitz   egin   du
        Peter.E little   too‑much word make.PF AUX
        'Peter spoke little / too much'

(47) b. ??Pellok hitz   gutxi / gehiegi   egin   du
         Peter.E word little   too‑much do.PF AUX
   'Peter spoke little / too much'

According to our analysis, the possibilities for incorporation seen with *hitz egin* extends to other LVCs in eastern dialects.

§5. Conclusion.

We conclude from this study that for most speakers the three structures in (8) are available, although their availability has different manifestations according to the dialect and the LVC. Thus in Basque we find, with various lexical restrictions and dialectal nuances, three possibilities for the realization of the nominal element presented at the beginning of the paper, and repeated below with the a representation of the relevant structure of VP and Case assignment:

- DP + absolute (48a) ;
- NP + inherent case (48b) ;
- N_{inc} (48c).

(48) a. Lan ederra   / gutxi egin   dugu
        work fine.DET.A little do.PF AUX
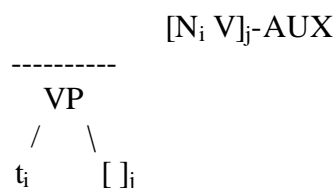   'We have done a fine job. / We haven't done much work.'

            DP_i V_j-AUX
            Case

                  VP
                /   \
               t_i t_j
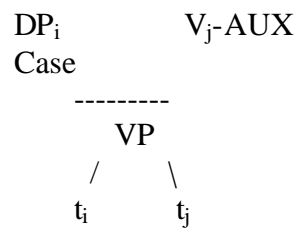
(48) b. Ederki   / gutxi egin   dugu lan
        fine.ADV   little do.PF AUX work
        'ditto'

                 V_j-AUX

                VP
              /   \
           NP t_j
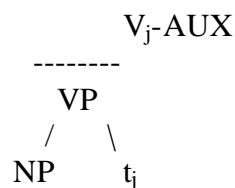
Inherent Case

(48) c. Ederki   / gutxi lan   egin   dugu
         fine.ADV little work do.PF AUX
         'ditto'

$$[N_i\ V]_j\text{-AUX}$$

```
         ----------
           VP
          /    \
        t_i     [ ]_j
```

As for the first possibility (48a), that we have only mentioned in this paper, it would deserve a more detailed analysis because, as Artiagoitia (2002) showed, the exact structure of the phrase which receives absolutive case is not as clear as morphology seems to indicate. The second possibility (48b) follows a general tendency among languages to coalesce Vs and bare direct objects (Mithun 1984). However, there is no noun incorporation in (48b), since NP is assigned inherent case by V within VP as Laka (1993) proposed. Furthermore, NP retains a true syntactic autonomy in (48b) allowing its separation from V, since the latter moves toward the left periphery of the sentence. NPs being limited to bare nouns in structures like (48b), syntactic properties distinguishing them from incorporated nouns only are visible in structures involving V-movement like (48c).

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