Valency and Argument Structure in the Basque Verb
Ricardo Etxepare

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Valency and Argument Structure in the Basque Verb

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Leaving aside a small set of verbs (see 3.6.3.), Basque finite verbs are composed of an morphologically independent lexical verb carrying aspectual information, and a clitic auxiliary bearing Tense, Agreement and Modal affixes. The choice of auxiliaries in Basque seems to be largely dependent on the valency of the predicate. Intransitive, transitive, and ditransitive auxiliaries typically correspond to monovalent, bivalent and trivalent predicates. The arguments of the verb (participants in the event, such as agents, themes or patients, and beneficiaries) are mapped systematically by person and number morphology corresponding to grammatical functions such as subject, object and indirect object. Changes in the argument structure of the verb (as in the causative/inchoative alternation) are also signaled in the choice of the auxiliary. However, in some cases the correlation between valency and choice of auxiliary does not, or does not seem to obtain. The mismatch between valency and morphology is due in these cases to the contribution of an aspectual dimension (Grimshaw, 90) (see section 1.3).

In order to maintain the two domains clear (lexical structure and morphology), I will refer to the valency of the verb with categories such as monovalent, bivalent or trivalent (see Hualde, section 3.6.3 in this book), and to its morphological expression with categories such as intransitive and transitive. The latter are familiar from the structural analysis of basic verbal paradigms (Hualde, in section 3.6.3.) and are based on the presence/absence of ergative morphology. When ergative morphology is present in the paradigm corresponding to a finite form, I will refer to that form as transitive. Otherwise, I will refer to that form as intransitive.

1.1. Case and Agreement patterns

Basque is an ergative language in both its case marking system and in its verbal morphology (with splits depending on Tense, see Hualde, section 3.6.3). That is, a language where subjects of intransitive verbs and objects of transitive ones are Case-marked and cross-referenced in the agreement elements of the verb identically and differently from subjects of transitive verbs. The Case marking of transitive subjects is called ergative, that of intransitive subjects and objects of transitives, absolutive. Table 1 shows the absolutive and ergative case endings in the three numbers (singular, plural and indefinite)¹:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Indefinite</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ergative</td>
<td>-ak</td>
<td>-ek</td>
<td>-(e)k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolutive</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td>-ak</td>
<td>∅</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ This table differs from Ortiz de Urbina’s (1989,p.6), that I give below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
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</table>

I take the common element -a- of both singular ergative and plural absolutive to be the determiner –a that one finds in all singular and plural noun phrases in Basque. Hence not part of the Case marking itself. As for the plural form of absolutes, it is probably nothing other than a combination of the
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Indefinite</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolutive</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>-Ø</td>
<td>Ø</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ergative pattern is displayed in the following examples:

(i)  
   a. Peruk ardoa edan du  
   Peru-erg wine-D-abs drink Aux-T  
   'Peru drank wine'
   b. Ardoa/Peru iritsi da  
   wine-D-abs/Peru-abs arrived Aux-I  
   'The wine/Peru arrived'

As for verbal agreement, Basque incorporates three types of person agreement markers: ergative, absolutive (zero in the case of third person singular), and dative. Verbs fall into two main subclasses, according to whether they include an ergative marker (transitives) or not (intransitives). Each class will incorporate a dative marker if there is a dative argument in the clause. Auxiliaries containing an ergative marker are built up on the (auxiliary) verb *edun (to have), whereas the auxiliaries that bear no ergative marker are built up on the verb izan (to be). We have then four classes out of all logical combinations of Ergative, Absolutive and Dative:

(2) a. Absolutive  
     b. Absolutive-Dative (IZAN)  
     c. Ergative-absolutive  
     d. Ergative-Absolutive-Dative (*EDUN)

All those combinations correspond to actual different auxiliary forms. We give below a few examples of each type:

\[\text{determiner } -\text{a- and an affix indicating plurality. One finds that same combination in cases of plural agreement with absolutive subjects an objects in predicative expressions:}\]

(i)  
   a. Jonek liburu-a-k irakurr-i-a-k ditu  
   Jon-erg book-D-pl read-partc-D-pl Aux-T  
   'Jon has those books read'
   b. Adiskide-a-k etorr-i-a-k dira  
   friend-d-pl come-partc-D-pl Aux-I  
   'My friends have arrived'

Indefinite ergative subjects take a vowel –e- before the Case marker if the noun to which it attaches ends in a consonant. The fact that the Case marking of indefinites does not require –e- suggests that that affix is really a plural marker in plural ergatives, perhaps fused to the Case marker -k. Then the –a- that precedes the singular ergative case marker is a singular marker, identical to the singular determiner –a .

There is also an optional agreement marker that encodes the addressee (see Hualde, section 3.6.2). As it is not part of the argument structure of the verb, I will leave it aside.
In non-past Tenses, the agreement pattern is also ergative: the subject-affix of intransitive auxiliaries and the object affix of transitive ones are identical, and different from the transitive subject marker. Consider as an example the first person agreement marker in the two verbal forms below:

(4)       a. Etorr-i    n-a-iz “I came”
            come-partc 1sing(abs)-Present-root
b. Ekarri    n-a-u-zu “You brought me”
            bring-partc 1sing(abs)-Present-root-2sing(erg)
c. Ekarri   d-u-t “I brought it”
            bring-partc Present-root-1sing(erg)

d) involves two gaps in a control structures. One gap corresponds to the transitive subject, and another one to the object. Only the subject can (and must) be interpreted as coreferent with the matrix subject

Levin (1983) provides other control structures with complements of jussive verbs such as agindu “to order” and eskatu “to ask”. Ortiz de Urbina objects to the relevance of those facts on two bases:
in (5b) and not on the patient discards an interpretation a-la Marantz (1984) of the facts.

(ii) Coordinate structures:

A common phenomenon occurring in coordinated clauses is the deletion of material in the second conjunct under referential identity with elements of the first conjunct. This sort of deletion process is available in Basque too, but is limited to subject arguments, transitive or intransitive:

(ii) [Jonek seema eskolan utzi zuen] eta [e klasera joan zen]
Jon-erg son-abs school-in leave Aux-T and class-to go Aux-I
‘Jon left his son at school, and then he (Jon/*his son) went to class’

To the extent that those phenomena separate intransitive and transitive subjects from transitive objects (unlike in syntactically ergative languages), we can conclude that Basque behaves as a syntactically accusative language.

4 first, those complements are not obligatory control structures, since they can have overt subjects, disjoint in reference from the purported controller:

(i) [Ni-k ikusteko] agindu/eskatu du
I-erg see-N-for order/ask-partc Aux-T
‘He asked/ordered for me to see it’

Then, even syntactically ergative languages, such as Dyirbal (Dixon,1979) seem to behave “accusatively” in this sort of complement. Neither is the case in indirect wh-questions such as those in (5).

Ortiz de Urbina (1989, p.18-20) following Heath (1972), presents also the following facts as supporting the idea that Basque is syntactically accusative: Some eastern dialects of Basque assign or require a genitive case for complements of nominalized verbs. Only transitive objects can acquire such a Case. Subjects of intransitives cannot. Genitive Case therefore singles out objects from subjects, be it transitive or intransitive (see Heath, 1972):

(i) a. Horren egiteko abiatu gara
that-g do-N-for set out Aux-I
‘We set out to do that (lit. …to do of that)’

b. *Ene etortzeko…
me-g come-N-for

Although the contrast is clear in contexts such as (i), it is also the case that those purposive adverbial clauses in Basque are control structures, as evidenced by the fact that an overt subject is impossible:

(i) *[Guk/gure horren egiteko] abiatu gara
we-erg/we-g that-g do-N-for set out-partc Aux-I

But if so, the impossibility of (ib) follows from the theory of control, and is irrelevant to the point. As for the purported evidence brought up by the distribution of reciprocal reflexive forms (p.20-21), it reduces to the fact that they cannot appear in subject position of either transitive or intransitive verbs:

(i) a. Adiskideek elkar ikusi dute
friends-erg each-other see-partc Aux-T
‘The friends saw each other’
1.3. Basque as an “extended” ergative language

Ergative languages divide into two different Case patterns. One, exemplified by Dyirbal or Samoan, marks all subjects of intransitive verbs identically, irrespective of the aspectual or agentive properties of the verb or the agentive properties of the single argument. Another one, exemplified by Basque and Georgian, among other ergative languages, marks some subjects of intransitives as objects of transitives (that is, absolutive), and some others as subjects of transitive verbs (with the ergative Case). A pattern that Dixon (1979, 1994) calls “extended ergative”. This split case marking pattern depends apparently on the aspectual properties of the verb, particularly on whether it is telic or not (see section 4.1. for a discussion on Basque; and Lyell, 1995, p.120-123 for Georgian). In this, Basque seems to express morphologically a distinction that has been noted syntactically in other languages between unaccusative and unergative predicates (Perlmutter, 1978; Burzio, 1981). Subjects of unergative predicates take the ergative Case, subjects of unaccusative predicates take the absolutive Case. In accord with Case marking, unergative predicates take the transitive auxiliary, and unaccusative predicates the intransitive one:

(iii) a. Jonek ardoa ekarri du
     Jon-erg wine-abs bring-partc Aux-T
     ‘Jon brought the wine’

b. Jonek saltatu du
   Jon-erg jump-partc Aux-T
   ‘Jon jumped’

c. Jon etorri da
   ‘Jon came’

This is the basic outline of the relation between valency, Case and auxiliary selection. Auxiliary selection and Case marking in Basque are also conditioned by the aspectual configuration of the verb phrase. This is particularly clear in the presence of measuring or affected complements (in the sense of Tenny, 1994), that enforce the presence of a transitive auxiliary (section 2 and 4.4). The expression of possessive structures also affects auxiliary selection and (concomitant) Case marking. What follows is a thorough (never exhaustive) examination of the relation between argument structure, aspectual configuration and auxiliary selection.

b. *Elkar joan ziren
   each other go Aux-T
   ‘*Each other went’

c. *Elkarrek ikusi dituzte lagunak
   each other-erg see-partc Aux-T   friends
   ‘*Each other saw the friends’

But (b,c) also lack appropriate antecedents for the reciprocal, so their ungrammaticality could be only indirectly linked to subjecthood (via binding theory).
2. Intransitive Monovalent Structures

2.1. Existence

The most simple intransitive monovalent structure in Basque is constituted by the verb *izan* “to be” as a lexical verb, in statements of existence:

(8) *Izan ala ez izan, horra auzia*

to be or not to be, that’s the question

(9) *Ni naiz nirez, nire borondatez* (Ar. K:42)
I am by myself, by my own will

Existence can also be stated through the borrowing *esistitu* “to exist”:

(10) *Esistitzen al da horrelako izakirik?*

Exists-Asp Q Aux such beings
‘Could there exist any such being?’

2.2. Copular constructions

2.2.1. Stage and individual level predications

Basque makes a distinction between stage level predications (those which attribute some transitory property to the subject of predication) and individual level predications (those which attribute some standing property to the subject of predication) in the auxiliaries selected to express them. Transient properties are assigned by the verb *egon* “to be in a location”, whereas standing properties are assigned through the verb *izan* “to be”. The distinction is akin to the one found in Spanish between *ser* and *estar*.

*izan* is also used in equative sentences.

(11) *Haien mende gaude gu, haien mende dago Euskara* (Ib. 68)
their will-in are-in a location we their will-in is-in a loc Basque

With some important differences, discussed in Zabala (1993). It seems that, at least in some varieties, *izan* can occur in all contexts in which *egon* can occur, but *egon* cannot in some cases where *izan* is possible. Those cases are the ones presented above as typical contexts of insertion for *egon*. However, there is a difference in the availability of *izan* vis-à-vis *egon* when *izan* is used in contexts where *egon* can be used a locative complement is absolutely necessary. This is not the case for *egon* :

(i) a. Xabier al da? b. Xabier etxean al da?

Xabier-Abs Q is Xabier-Abs home-loc Q is
‘Is that Xabier?’ ‘Is Xabier home?’

‘Is Xabier there?’

(ii) a. Xabier al dago? b. Xabier etxean al dago?

Xabier-Abs Q is Xabier-Abs home-loc Q is
‘Is Xabier there?’ ‘Is Xabier home?’

Not all speakers seem to agree on those judgements. For Zabala (1993), both *izan* (when it is used in the contexts where *egon* can be used) and *egon* must be accompanied by a locative complement. See Zabala (this volume) for a detailed discussion of these facts.
‘We are under their will, Basque is under their will’

(12) Nekatuta / etxean     dago
   tired home-at he-is (in a location)
   ‘He is tired/home’

(13) Gu ez gara nor,     gu ez gara ezer,     gu ez gara aberri-lorrean
   we not are anybody, we not are anything, we not are country carrying
   ari geran txindurri txatxar batzuk besterik (Ib.288)
   Asp are-Rel ant miserable some but
   ‘We are nobody, we are nothing, we are but miserable ants carrying the
    country’

(14) Xabier argia da
   Xabier-abs intelligent is
   ‘Xabier is intelligent’

(15) Jekill doktorea Mr. Hide zen
   Jekill doctor Mr. Hide was
   ‘Dr.Jekill was Mr.Hide’

Nouns expressing jobs can be followed by either izan or egon, with two different interpretations:

(16) a. Xabier zerbitzari dago kafetegi horretan
   Xabier-abs waiter is-in a location cafe that-in
   ‘Xabier is working as a waiter in that cafe’

   b. Xabier zerbitzari(a) da
   Xabier-Abs waiter is
   ‘Xabier is a waiter’

   Whereas in (a) it is implied that Xabier is just in a temporary position (a job preceded
   by and probably followed by, some others), (b) implies that Xabier has this
   characterizing job.

2.2.2. Physical and Mental States

As expected, given the above characterization of the difference between izan and
egon, predications involving mental and physical states occur with egon (see also
section 2.7. and 4.6). The verb follows a bare stage level adjective or a participle, never a
locative phrase:

(17) a. Bero/hotz nago
   hot/cold be-in a location
   ‘I am hot/cold’

   b. Egarri/ gose nago
   thirsty/hungry be-in a location
   ‘I am thirsty/hungry’

   b. Haserre nago
   angry be-in a location
   ‘He is angry’

   b. Gaiso dago gaur
   fear be-in a location today
   ‘He is sick today’

Adjectives which follow that same pattern are ados (egon) “to be in accord, to agree”,

8
“alde (egon)” “to be in favor”, “kontra egon” “to be against”, “lasai egon” “to be calm”, “uzkur egon” “to be reticent”, “harro egon” “to be proud”, “kexu egon” “to complain (to be in complain)”, “ikara egon” “to be scared (to be in tremble)”, “beltzuri egon” “to be frowning/sad”, “jelos egon” “to be jealous”, “urduri egon” “to be nervous”, “larri egon” “to be in a critical condition”, “oker egon” “to be wrong”, “triste egon” “to be sad”, “ziur egon” “to be sure”, “haurdun egon” “to be pregnant”, “oinuts egon” “to be barefoot”.

Although the great majority of stage level adjectives are followed by egon, there is a subset of them that is followed by izan. They are the following: “ahalke” (E), “lotsa izan” “to be ashamed”, “aiher izan” (E) “to be desirous”, “bekaitz izan” “to be envious”, “fio izan” “to trust (to be in trust)”, “antsi izan” (E) “to be anxious”, “herabe izan” (E) “to be fearful, shy”, “damu izan” “to be regretful”, “haizu izan” (E) “to be allowed”.

(18) a. Lotsa naiz/*nago
     ‘I am ashamed’
  c. Damu naiz/*nago
     ‘I am regretful’

Of those predicates, “inbiri” “envy”, “damu” “regretful”, “lotsa” “shame” and “herabe” “fearful” can also be constructed with the transitive auxiliary, giving rise to a possessive construction where the mental state is the possessed term and the experiencer the subject:

(19) a. Inbiri(a) dut
     envy-D Aux-T
     ‘I have envy’
  b. Lots haundia dut
     shame big-D Aux-T
     ‘I have shame’

Other (individual level) adjectives that are constructed with izan are only possible in the third person. They usually take a clausal complement, or a demonstrative referring to a proposition (see Artiagoitia, this volume):

(20) a. Neke/errez da
     hard/easy is
     ‘It is hard/easy’
  c. Zilegi da
     permitted is
     ‘It is permitted’

2.3. Existential sentences

Existential sentences are constructed with the verb egon in Basque⁶:

(21) a. Badago gizon bat atean
     Aff-is-location man a at the door
     ‘There is a man at the door’
  b. Gizon bat atean dago
     man a door-at is-loc

---

⁶ The claim is subject to the same observation as before: in some varieties, izan can be used in existential sentences.
‘There is a man at the door’
‘A man is at the door’

2.4. Verbs of location and directional motion

2.4.1. Purely ntransitive predicates

The following verbs of location and directional motion are necessarily followed by the intransitive auxiliary izan (22-23):

(22) a. Etorri da come Aux ‘He came’
    b. Joan da go Aux ‘He went/left’
    c. Ailegatu da arrive Aux ‘He arrived’
    d. erori da fall Aux ‘He fell’
    e. Partitu da (E) depart Aux-I ‘He left’
    f. Jaiki da get up Aux-I ‘He got up’

(23) a. Etxean egon da at home been Aux ‘He has been home’
    b. Etxean gelditu da home-at stayed Aux-I ‘He stayed home’
    c. Ez da hor kabitzen neg Aux-I ‘It does not fit there’

2.4.2. Aspectual Structure and Transitivity Alternations with Motion and Location verbs

It has long been noted that notions such as the internal configuration of an event (its having a specified endpoint, a process subpart, or a given length of completion) defines different aspectual classes that affect the syntactic mapping of the event participants. Motion and location verbs in Basque give rise to a transitivity alternation that involves clear aspectual notions such as the affected status of an object or the measuring out of the event denoted by the verb, in the sense of Tenny (1994). The transitive structures are produced by changing the choice of auxiliary from izan “to be” to *edun “to have”.

This transitivity alternation involves motion verbs such as igo “to go up”, igaro “to pass by” and jaitsi “go down, descend” and ibili “to walk”, whose lexical structure specifies a path along which the movement proceeds. In these cases the transitive alternate produces an “affected” reading, where the whole surface of the movement gets “used up”:

(24) a. Mendi horretara igo naiz mountain that-to rise aux-I ‘I climbed to that mountain’
    b. Mendi hori igo dut mountain that climb aux-T ‘I climbed that mountain’
(25) a. Ibai hartatik igaro dira river that-through pass aux-I ‘They went through that river’
    b. Ibai hura igaro dute river that cross aux-T ‘They crossed that river’
(26) a. Jaitsi da ‘200 metro jaitsi ditu oinutsik’
go-down Aux-I       200 mts     descend Aux-T barefoot
‘He went down, descended’ ‘He descended 200 meters barefoot’

(27) a. Bertatik/hiru egunes       ibili naiz
there-through/for three days walk Aux-I
‘I walked over there/for three days’

b. Harainoko bidea/hiru kilometro ibili dut/ditut
there-to-g way-D/three kilometers walk Aux-T(sing/plural)
‘I walked three kilometers/the way to there’

(24a) for instance can be used in contexts such as (28), but (24b) cannot:

(28) a. Mendi         horretara igo      naiz,   baina ez   naiz   tontorreraino iritsi
mountain that-to climb Aux-I but neg Aux-I top-to get
‘I climbed to that mountain, but i didn´t get to the top’

b. Mendi         hura igo dut, #baina ez naiz tontorreraino iritsi
mountain that climb Aux-T but neg Aux-I top-to get
‘I climbed that mountain, #but I didn’t get to the top’

Some of these verbs, for instance igo and jaitsi, can be bivalent, in which case the nominal complement is understood as the patient or theme of the event. The auxiliary following the verb is transitive in that case too, and the transitivity alternation involved is of the causative/inchoative type (see section 4.2. in this chapter):

(29) a. Kaxa guziak igo        ditut
Box   all        take up aux-T
‘I took up all the boxes’

b. Kaxak     jaitsi           ditut
box-pl take down aux-T
‘I took down the boxes’

The specified distance and the object can occur together in these cases. Agreement is with the theme argument:

(30) a. Kaxak 200 metro igo        ditut
boxes-D 200 mts   take up Aux-T
‘I took up the boxes 200 meters’

b. Kaxak 200 metro jaitsi ditut
boxes-D 200 mts   take down Aux-T
‘I took down the boxes 200 meters’

An interesting subcase of this sort of transitivity alternation is provided by two verbs of movement: iritsi and heldu, both meaning “arrive, get somewhere”. Their transitive counterpart means “reach” in the case of iritsi, and “grab” in the case of heldu. The latter requires a ditransitive auxiliary:


7 Heldu also means “to ripen, to mature”. See next section.
(31) a. *Iritsu da*       b. *Iritsu du*
   arrive Aux-I       reach Aux-T
   ‘He/she arrived’   ‘He/she reached it’

(32) a. *Heldu da*       b. *Heldu dio*
   arrive Aux-I       grab Aux-DT
   ‘He/she arrived’   ‘He/she grabbed him’

Both *iritsu* and *heldu*, meaning “arrive” contrast sharply with *ailegatu*, also meaning “to arrive”, that cannot be converted into a transitive verb. Why should *iritsu* and *heldu*, but not *ailegatu* have a transitive counterpart? Consider the contrast between the two verbs when they occur inside a complement to *hasi*, “to begin” or *bukatu* “to finish”, two verbs that can have an aspectual function as semiauxiliaries:

(33) a. *Kamioia Iruna iristen hasi da*
   runner Irun-to arrive begin Aux-I
   ‘The truck began to arrive to Irun (a village)’

   b. *??Kamioia Iruna ailegatzen hasi da*
   runner stadium-to arrive begin Aux-I
   ‘The truck began to arrive to Irun’

(34) a. *Paketeak bukatu du iristen*
   package-Erg finish Aux-T arrive-N-Loc
   ‘The package finished arriving’

   b. *??Paketeak bukatu du ailegatzen*
   package-Erg finish Aux-T arrive-N-Loc
   ‘The package finished arriving’

Whereas *iritsu* admits being the main predication of the complement of *hasi* and *bukatu*, *ailegatu* doesn’t. The contrast can be accounted for under the assumption that *iritsu*, but not *ailegatu*, involves in its argument structure a path structure (that can be focused on for different subparts) for the event it denotes (Jackendoff, 1983, p.161-170). Observe that the rest of the pure intransitive motion verbs are also impossible under *hasi* with the meaning in which subparts of a purported path are selected:

(35) a. *Londresera joaten hasi da*       b. *Bilbora etortzen hasi da*
   London-to go-Ger begin Aux-I       Bilbao-to come-Ger begin Aux-I
   ‘He began to go to London’     ‘He began to come to Bilbao’

In none of the above cases does the beginning refer to the internal configuration of the coming or going event, but rather to the beginning of an habitual fact: that John comes or goes somewhere frequently.

In the case of *bukatu* “to finish”, the complement with *iritsu* is interpreted in terms of a path structure. An appropriate scenario for the interpretation of (28a) could be the following: the package, which was coming from Pakistan to my homevillage in the Basque Country, was lost in the village post office but finally managed to reach my
house The complement with ailegatu cannot be interpreted that way.

Heldu, which also enters into a transitivity alternation, goes with iritsi, and not ailegatu.

(36) Kamioia Iruna heltzen hasi da
  Truck-abs Irun-to arrive-N-ger begin Aux-I
  ‘The truck began to arrive to Irun’

The lexical structure of iritsi and heldu, specifying a motion through a path, allows the transitive use of those verbs.

A similar distinction affects partitu (E) and joan ‘depart’, which can only be used intransitively, and abiatu “set off”, which can be used transitively. Abiatu shows an alternation similar to the jaitsi and igaro cases (ex.25-26). Observe the contrast below:

(37) a. Abiatu da
    set off Aux-I

b. Konpainiak proiektu berri bat abiatu du
   company-Erg new project-Abs set off Aux-T

c. *Konpainiak hiru langile abiatu ditu
   company-Erg three worker set off Aux-T

Whereas the transitive abiatu allows an object such as proiektu berri bat “a new project”, it does not admit an animate object such as hiru langile “three workers”. The reason is that proiektu berri bat is an affected object, one that is constructed as the event goes on. Hiru langile “three workers” however cannot be affected that way: the only interpretation the complement can give rise to is one in which it is a theme, an object set in motion by an agent. This latter alternation would be of the inchoative/causative type. But in this case, to get a causative interpretation, we need a causative affix:

(38) Konpainiak hiru langile abiarazi ditu
    company-Erg three workers set off-cause Aux-T

---

* If verbs such as heldu or iritsi have a path structure, with a process subpart and an endpoint, we may have a partial explanation of why in some varieties of Basque the participial intransitive form of heldu, as in (i):

(37) Heldu da
    Arrive-partc Aux-I
    ‘It arrived’
    ‘It is arriving now (it comes)’

Is ambiguous between a process reading and a result reading. In those varieties where (i) is possible, the verb heldu lexicalizes either the process or the result state of a path structure.
Verbs of location can also be classified according to their ability to transitivize. Consider for instance the verb *gelditu* which means either “remain” or “stop” in its intransitive use. When it is used transitively, only the “stop” meaning remains. The transitive alternate means “to cause x to stop”. The alternation is thus of the causative/inchoative type. *Egon* “stay, be in a location” only takes the intransitive auxiliary:

(39) a. *Zakurra bidean gelditu* da
    dog-the way-in stop/remain aux
    ‘The dog stopped/remained in the way’

b. *Jon* *zakurra* *gelditu* du
    Jon-Erg dog-the stop aux
    ‘Jon stopped the dog’

(40) *Zakurra denbora luzez egon da etzanda*
    dog-D long time be/stay Aux-I lying
    ‘The dog stayed lying/laid for a long time’

### 2.5. Verbs of occurrence and appearance

The availability of a transitive alternate distinguishes between two subsets among the verbs of occurrence: *Gertatu* “to happen, to result in” and *Pasatu* “to happen, to come by, to go through” on the one hand, *Jazo* (B) “to happen, to occur” on the other.

The two meanings of *gertatu* are illustrated below:

(41) a. *Ezbehar bat gertatu da*
    accident one happen Aux-I
    ‘An accident occurred’

(42) a. *Euskal arimaren mintzabide gerta dadin* (MEIG III, 118)
    Basque spirit-of expression result Aux-I-Subj.
    ‘So that it results in the expression of the basque spirit’

b. *Irrigarri gertatu gara*
    ridiculous result-partc Aux-I
    ‘We found ourselves in ridicule’

c. *Horrelako beharrean gertatu naiz*
    such need result-partc Aux-I
    ‘I found myself in such a need’

In (41), *gertatu* is just a verb denoting occurrence. In (42), it is clearly a resultative verb, allowing secondary predication of a result state. The different meanings of *pasatu* are illustrated in (43)-(44).

(43) a. *Hala pasatu da*  
    so happen Aux-I

b. *Jende anitz pasa da*
    people many pass-by Aux
‘So it happened’  ‘A lot of people came by’

(44)  a. Ibaian zehar /ibaitik river-in through pass Aux-I
    ‘I went through the river’

In other words, there is no transitive equivalent of *gertatu* “to happen” or *pasatu* “to happen, to come by”.

Only the resultative *gertatu* can be transitivized (45), with the meaning of “to prepare, to arrange”, and only the path structure *pasatu* takes a transitive auxiliary (46):

(45)  a. Afaria gertatu dugu dinner prepared Aux-T
    ‘We prepared the dinner’

b. Gertatu zuten urkamendia arrange Aux-T scaffold-D
    ‘The arranged the scaffold’

(46)  a. Ibaia pasatu dut river cross Aux-T
    ‘I crossed the river’

b. Gorriak pasatu ditu hardship pass Aux-T
    ‘He went through/endured hardship’

This transitivity alternation thus recalls the one found in motion verbs such as *igo* “to climb” or *jaitsi* “to descend”. *Pasatu* can also have a bivalent transitive form, in the same way that verbs such as *jaitsi* or *igo* can, taking a theme argument complement:

(47)  Kontrabandoa pasatu dute contraband-D pass-partc Aux-T
    ‘They passed the contraband’

*Jazo* “to happen” cannot be transitivized, as it does not have a resultative or a bounded space reading:

(48)  a. Hori jazo da that happen Aux-I
    ‘That happened’

b. *Parregarri jazo gara ridicule happen Aux-I
    ‘(Intended) we found ourselves in ridicule’

c. *Hori jazo du that happen Aux-T

Verbs that express occurrence as a matter of chance, such as *suertatu*, *tokatu*, *fortunatu*, are followed invariably by an intransitive auxiliary:

(49)  Halaxe/hori suertatu/fortunatu/tokatu da oraingoan so/that happen-partc by chance Aux-I this time
    ‘So it happened this time/that happened this time (by chance)”

Other verbs of appearance such as *agertu* “to show up, to appear (somewhere)”, and *azaldu* “to show up, to pop up, to surface” give rise to an inchoative/causeitative alternation. When they are transitivized they become “to show” and “to explain, to
expose” respectively:

(50) a. Untzi bat agertu da ostertzean
    ship one appear Aux-I horizon-in
    ‘A ship appeared in the horizon’
b. Azkenaldian problemak azaldu dira
    lately problems pop up Aux
    ‘Problems popped up lately’

(51) a. Nere borondatea agertu nion
    my will show Aux-DT
    ‘I show him my willingness’
b. Teorema azaldu nion
    theorem explain Aux-DT
    ‘I explained the theorem to him’

Not all verbs of appearance can enter into such an alternation. For instance desagertu “disappear” cannot. To convert desagertu into a transitive verb we need to invoke the causative affix -erazi:

(52) Gorpua desagertarazi dute
    corps disappear-Cause Aux
    ‘they made the corps disappear’

2.6. Verbs of change of state

Verbs of change of state can also be divided into those that admit and those that don’t admit transitivization. Consider for instance the difference between jaio “be born” and sortu “come into existence”. Whereas the first only involves a result state, the second one is a complex event. Only sortu allows transitivization:

(53) a. Irunen jaio da
    Irun-in born Aux-I
    ‘He is born in Irun’
b. Irunen sortu da
    Irun-in come-into-existence Aux
    ‘He came into existence in Irun’

(54) a. *Jaio du
    born Aux-T
    ‘He created it/gave it birth’
b. Sortu du
    create Aux-T
    ‘He created it/gave it birth’

A similar distinction affects garatu “to sprout, to develop”, ugaldu “to multiply, to increase in number”, ondu “to ripen”, on the one hand, and loratu “to bloom”, lilitu “to blossom”, heldu “to mature” on the other. The latter do not transitivize, the former do, with the following meanings: garatu “to develop (tr), ugaldu “to multiply (tr.), ondu “to ripen(tr.)”.

Verbs which denote the transition between two successive states, such as bihurtu “to become” and or more, such as bilakatu “to develop into”, can be conjugated either with the intransitive or the transitive auxiliary. With the transitive auxiliary, they mean
“to convert x into y” and “to develop x into y”:

(55) a. Aberats bihurtu da  
    rich  become Aux-I      'He became rich'

b. Famatua bilakatu da  
    famous  develop-into Aux-I      'He developed into a famous person'

(56) a. Eraikin hura zahar-etxe bihurtu dute  
    building that old folk's home convert Aux-T    'They converted that building into an old folk's home'

b. Aberatsentzako elkartokia bilakatu dute  
    rich-for meeting-club develop-into Aux-T    'They developed it into a meeting-club for the rich'

The verb jarri "to put", when used intransitively, with an animate subject and following a stage level adjective or an adverb denoting a mental state, also has the meaning of “to become”:

(57) Triste/pozik jarri da  
    sad/glad put Aux-I    'He became sad/glad'

2.7. Weather Verbs

The event configuration of weather verbs also allows transitivity alternations. Non-eventive predications are formed with a nominal expression and the verb egon "to be in a location":

(58) a. Bero dago  
    hot  is  'It is hot'

b. Hotz dago  
    cold  is  'It is cold'

c. Ilun dago  
    dark is  'It is dark'

d. Ateri dago  
    clear is  'It is clear'

As soon as we focus on the resultative state of a weather change, we are forced to use the transitive auxiliary

5 For some reason it does not extend to goibel "cloudy". Its perfective form requires the intransitive auxiliary:

(i) a. Goibel dago  
    cloudy is  'It is cloudy'

b. Goibeldu da/*du  
    cloudy-partc Aux-I/T  'It became cloudy'

6 Whereas (59a-c) can specify the object of change (the day or evening becomes hot, cold or dark), (59d) cannot. In those cases, the perfective forms become intransitive (i), unless the agent or cause of change becomes itself explicit too:

(i) a. Eguna berotu da/*du  
    day-D warm-partc Aux-I/T  'The day became hot'

b. Eguna hoztu da/*du  
    day-D cold Aux-I/T  'The day became cold'

c. Eguna ilundu da/*du  
    'It became cloudy'

d. *Zerua atertu da
When the weather condition involves events, such as "rain", or "snow", the transitive auxiliary is the only option. The gerundive aspectual particle ari is obligatory in this case:

\[
\begin{align*}
(60) & \quad \text{a. Euria ari du} & \quad \text{b. Elurra ari du} & \quad \text{c. Izotza ari du} \\
& \quad \text{rain Ger Aux-T} & \quad \text{snow Ger Aux-T} & \quad \text{freeze Ger Aux-T} \\
& \quad \text{‘It is raining’} & \quad \text{‘It is snowing’} & \quad \text{‘It is freezing’}
\end{align*}
\]

Generic statements involving atmospheric conditions also involve the transitive auxiliary, rather than egon:

\[
\begin{align*}
(61) & \quad \text{a. Herri horietan bero haundia egiten du/?dago} \\
& \quad \text{day-D dark-partc Aux-I/T sky clear Aux-I} \\
& \quad \text{‘The day darkened’}
\end{align*}
\]

(ii) a. Hego haizeak eguna berotu du
south wind-Erg day-D warm-partc Aux-T
‘The south wind warmed the day’

b. Hodeiek eguna ilundu dute
clouds-Erg day-D dark-partc Aux-T
‘The clouds darkened the day’

Although Basque is a pro-drop language on the three basic arguments of the verb (subject, object and indirect object) on no account should the examples in (30) be interpreted as derived from regular transitive bivalent structures such as (2) above by pro-drop on the subject. Consider the following contrast, where the empty brackets represent a purported pro-dropped argument:

\[
\begin{align*}
(iii) & \quad \text{a. [ ]i berotu du, baina [ ]i ez zen berez hain haize beroa} \\
& \quad \text{day-D warm-partc Aux-T, but not was by itself such warm wind-D} \\
& \quad \text{‘Iti warmed, but iti wasn’t such a hot air’}
\end{align*}
\]

b. [ ]i eguna berotu du, baina [ ]i ez zen hain haize beroa
day-D warm-partc Aux-T, but not was such warm wind-D
‘It warmed the day, but it wasn’t such a hot air’

Whereas the subject of a transitive bivalent weather predicate is referential, whether pro-dropped or not, the subject of a transitive monovalent weather predicate cannot be referred to. Pro-dropped elements in Basque are referential.
country those-in hot big do-Hab Aux-T/be-in a location
‘In those countries it is very hot (as a property of those countries)’

b. Ifar poloan hotz haundia egiten du?/dago
north pole-in cold big do-Hab Aux-T/be-in a location
‘In the north pole, it is very cold (as a property of the pole)’

Although the transitive forms can also be used, together with the noun+egon forms, to express punctual situations:

(62) a. Jamaikan bero haundia dago (oraintxe)
jamaica-in hot big be-in a location (right now)
‘In Jamaica it is very hot right now’

b. Jamaikan bero haundia egiten du (oraintxe)
Jamaica-in hot big do-Hab Aux-T right now
‘In Jamaica it is very hot right now’

2.8. Aspectual and Control Verbs

2.8.1. Aspectual Verbs

Basque has a seemingly purely intransitive aspectual verb ari izan, which is used to form the gerundive. This aspectual verb follows a locative nominal expressing an event, or a nominalized clause11 (see Oihartzabal, this volume):

(63) a. Lanean ari da
work-in ari Aux-I
‘He is writing’

b. Lanean aritu da
work-in ari-Partc Aux-I
‘He has been working’

With the same function western Basque also has egon “be in a location”:

(64) a. Lanean dago
work-in is
‘He is working’

b. Lanean egon da
work-in be Aux-I
‘He has been working’

The verb hasi has also an aspectual, monovalent use (“to begin to”), when followed by a locative phrase containing a bare nominal or a nominalized clause. In this case it is followed by the intransitive auxiliary izan (see Artiagoitia, chapter XXX):

(65) a. Lanean hasi naiz
work-in begin Aux-I
‘He is working’

b. Idazten hasi naiz
writing begin Aux-I
‘He has been working’

11 This aspectual verb is followed by a transitive auxiliary only when it follows a nominal expressing an eventive weather condition:

(i) Euria ari du
rain ari Aux-T
‘It is raining’
‘I began to work’  

‘I began to write/writing’

Hasi “to begin” can also be a bivalent verb, in which case it is followed by a transitive auxiliary:

(66)  
\[
\text{Nobela berri bat hasi du} \\
\text{novel new one begin Aux-T} \\
\text{‘He began a new novel’}
\]

Also intransitive is the verb ibili “to walk” when it is used as a frequentative aspectual auxiliary:

(67)  
\[
\text{Bere burutazioak idazten ibiltzen da} \\
\text{my memories writing walking Aux-I} \\
\text{‘He is/keeps writing his thoughts’}
\]

The verb joan “to go” can be used as an aspectual verb denoting gradual change. In that case, it is preceded by a nominalized clause followed by the locative postposition:

(68)  
\[
\text{Ohitzen joan da} \\
\text{Custom-N-Loc go Aux-I} \\
\text{‘He has got used to it gradually’}
\]

2.8.2. Control verbs: the try -class

Control verbs of the try -class, are only conjugated with the intransitive auxiliary izan (qua control verbs). The nominalized complements of these verbs are followed by a locative suffix (see Artiagoitia, Subordination, 1.2.2.2.6) Consider for instance saiatu and ahalegindu “to try, to attempt” and ausartu “dare”:

(69)  
\[
\text{Xabier irifarre egiten saiatu/ahalegindu da} \\
\text{Xabier smile do-N-loc try Aux-I} \\
\text{‘Xabier tried to smile’}
\]

Saiatu can be used also as a transitive verb only with a nominal, non-clausal complement as “to try (something)”:  

(70)  
\[
\text{Mirenek soineko berria saiatu du} \\
\text{Miren-Erg dress new try Aux-T} \\
\text{‘Miren tried a new dress’}
\]

Neither ahalegindu nor ausartu have transitive counterparts.

2.9. Reflexives

In Basque, reflexivization operates either with the addition of reflexive arguments (elkar “each other” and X-ren burua “X-self” (literally “X’s head”)) or by
detransitivizing the auxiliary, which becomes the intransitive izan “to be”:

(71)  
\[ \text{a. Jonek bere burua ispiluan ikusi du} \]
\[ \text{Jone-Erg his head in the mirror see Aux-T} \]
\[ \text{‘Jon saw himself in the mirror’} \]
\[ \text{b. Jon ispiluan ikusi da} \]
\[ \text{jon mirror-in see Aux-I} \]
\[ \text{‘Jon saw himself in the mirror’} \]

The alternation is not entirely free, however. Many arguments can only take the reflexive argument, and cannot reflexivize via detransitivization, whereas other predicates can only form their reflexive by ditransitivizing. Still, a third class of predicates can be reflexivized in either of the two ways.

A sample of verbs that do not reflexivize with the intransitive auxiliary would consist of: maite izan “to love”, alsegin izan “to like”, erakutsi “to exhibit”, errepresentatu “to represent”, irudikatu “to represent, to picture”, ito “to drawn, to asfixiate”, erre “to burn”, jantzzi “to educate” (Abs), adoretu “to encourage”, akatu “to kill”, miretsi, ederretsi “to admire”, ezagutu “to know”, hobetsi “to favor”, igrunarazi “to preserve”, nabarmendu “to show off”, nahastu “to mess up”, puztu “to boast”, zuritu “to justify”. These verbs divide into three classes: those verbs whose intransitive forms are inchoatives, such as erre, ito, puztu, zuritu, puztu, nabarmendu, nahastu; verbs which are stative, such as maite izan, alsegin izan, ezagutu, miretsi, ederretsi and hobetsi, and then a handful of eventive verbs involving (active) representation, such as errepresentatu, irudikatu, and erakutsi.

Those predicates whose reflexive argument is mapped into a grammatical function which is not marked Absolutive, obligatorily take a reflexive noun phrase (case or postposition of the non-absolutive argument in parentheses): burlatu “to make fun of” (Instr.), leporatu “to impute” (Dat), egotzir “to attribute” (Dat), galdetu “to ask” (Dat), fidatu “to trust” (Instr.), solastatu “to talk with” (Com.), akaztu “to forget” (Instr), arduratu “to take responsibility for” (Instr), axolagabetu “to become unconcerned” (Instr), etsaitu “to become enemies” (Com), etsitu “to desperate” (Instr), jaramon egin “to pay attention” (Dat), kexu izan “to be uneasy with” (Instr), kasu egin “to pay attention” (Dat) sinetsi “to believe in” (loc):

(72)  
\[ \text{a. Bere buruarengan sinesten du} \]
\[ \text{his head-in believe Aux-T} \]
\[ \text{‘He believes in himself’} \]
\[ \text{b. *Sinisten da} \]
\[ \text{believe Aux-I} \]
\[ \text{‘He believes in himself’} \]
\[ \text{b. Bere buruari galdetu dio} \]
\[ \text{his head-Dat ask Aux-DT} \]
\[ \text{‘He asked himself/wondered’} \]
\[ \text{d. *Galdetu da} \]
\[ \text{ask Aux-T} \]
\[ \text{‘He asked himself/wondered’} \]

Predicates that reflexivize by either a reflexive argument or by an intransitive auxiliary constitute the richest group. Among them: aurkeztu “to introduce”, bota “to
throw (e.g. oneself under the bridge)", *estimatu* “to appreciate”, *laudatu*, *goraipatu* “to praise”, *gobernatu* “to look after oneself”, *libratu* “to set free”, *armatu* “to arm”, *babestu* “to protect”, *behartu* “to force”, *defendatu* “to defend”, *desondratu* “to dishonor”, *engainatu* “to deceive”, *gaitu* “to able”, *gertatu*, *prestatu* “to prepare, to arrange”, *ikusi* “to see”, *juzkatu* “to judge”, *konparatu* “to compare”, *saldu* “to sell (e.g. to the enemy)” *zaindu* “to take care of”:

(73) a. Xabier etengabe goraipatu da
   Xabier-Abs continuously praise   Aux-I
   ‘Xabier has praised himself continuously’

b. Xabierrek etengabe bere burua goraipatu du
   Xabier-Erg continuously his head praise Aux-T
   ‘Xabier has praised himself continuously’

The two alternative forms are not always equivalent. This is particularly clear with constructions that specify a path structure. Take for instance a verb like *babestu* “to protect”, that can be reflexivized through detransitivization or by a reflexive noun phrase:

(74) a. Babestu gara
    protect-partc Aux-I
    ‘We protected ourselves’

b. Gure buruak babestu ditugu
    our heads-abs protect-partc Aux-T
    ‘We protected ourselves’

If we introduce an adlative modifier and create a path structure, detransitivization becomes the only available strategy:

(75) a. Gerrilariek basora babestu dira
    partisans-abs wood-to protect-partc Aux-I
    ‘The partisans protected themselves into the woods’

b. *Gerrilariek beren buruak basora babestu dituzte
    partisans   their heads-abs woods-to protect-partc Aux-T
    ‘The partisans protected themselves into the woods’

The reflexive noun phrase is again possible if the modifier is locative, and expresses the place where the partisans protect themselves:

(76) a. Gerrilariek basoan babestu dituzte beren buruak
    partisans-erg wood-in protect-partc Aux-T their   heads-abs
    ‘The partisans protected themselves in the wood’

Consider now the verb *bota* “to throw”, a verb that inherently specifies direction of motion. The alternate with the reflexive phrase gives rise to ambiguous interpretation of modifiers in a way that the intransitive altyernates don’t:

(77) a. Xabier zubiazpian bota da
Xabier-abs under the bridge-loc throw Aux-I
‘Xabier threw himself under the bridge’
b. Xabierrek bere burua zubiazpian bota du
Xabier-erg his head-abs under the bridge-loc Aux-T
‘Xabier threw himself under the bridge’

In (77b) the locative modifier “under the bridge” is ambiguous between two readings: one that modifies the beginning of the event (that is the place from which the jumping takes place) or the endpoint of the event (the place where the jump ends). Xabier may have thrown himself from under the bridge or to under the bridge. In (77a) no such ambiguity arises: zubiazpian “under the bridge” only localizes the place from which the jumping takes place. The ambiguity in (77b) disappears if the postposition is directional. In this case the modifier marks the place from where the jumping occurred:

(78) Xabierrek bere burua zubiazpira bota du
Xabier-erg his head-abs under the bridge to throw Aux-T
‘Xabier threw himself (to) under the bridge’

The ambiguity in the scope of the locative suggests that reflexive forms constructed with a noun-phrase reflexive have a more complex structure than the intransitive reflexive forms.

Predicates that only admit the intransitive reflexive form are the so-called inherent reflexives: gorde “to hide” jantzi “to dress”, apaindu “to make up”, garbitu “to wash”, zikindu “to soil”, idortu, lehortu “to dry”. Intransitive forms here not allways have a reflexive meaning, they can also have an inchoative meaning:

(79) a. Jantziak lehortu dira
    clothes dry Aux-I
    ‘The clothes dried’
    b. Lehioak zikindu dira
    windows soil Aux-I
    ‘The windows soiled’
b. Eguzkia gorde da
    sun hide Aux-I
    ‘The sun hid’
    c. Zelaia lorez jantzi da
    field flower-instr dress Aux-I
    ‘The field became dressed with flowers’

All of them have also transitive forms in which the arguments are not coindexed, and which are associated to the inchoatives:

(80) a. Xabierrek zakurra garbitu du
    Xabier-erg dog-Abs wash Aux-T
    ‘Xabier washed the dog’
b. Xabier garbitu da
    Xabier-abs wash Aux-I
    ‘Xabier washed’

However, none of them can take a reflexive NP:
3. Intransitive Bivalent Structures (dative-absolutive constructions)

Dative-absolutive auxiliaries can be found following four different verb classes: (i) motion verbs; (ii) psych verbs of the *piacere* class; (iii) “dative of interest” constructions; and finally, a small set of verbs that alternate between dative-absolutive auxiliaries and ditransitive auxiliaries. Psych verbs are extensively discussed in section 4.6. “Dative of interest” constructions are treated in section 6, as possessive constructions. Here I will deal briefly with the first and last subclasses.

3.1. Motion verbs

Purely intransitive motion verbs may incorporate a dative agreement marker, as the verb *joan* “to go” below:

(84) a. *Joan da*  
    go     Aux-I(abs)  
    ‘He went’

b. *Joan zaio*  
    go     Aux-I(abs-dat)  
    ‘He went to him’

In verbs of motion, the dative argument has the role of endpoint of the motion. Consider for instance the aspectual difference between (a) and (b) above:

(85) a. *Xabier ordubietan Jonengan* *joan da.*  
    iritsi     gabea     zen (oraindik)  
    arrived without-Det was  yet
    ‘Xabier went to Miren at two o’clock. By four o’clock he wasn’t yet there’

b. *Xabier Miren ordubietan joan zaio.*  
    iritsi
    ‘Xabier went to Miren at two o’clock. By four o’clock he wasn’t yet there’
Alternatively, the dative can just express a relation of possession or interest between the absolutive subject and the argument marked by dative Case (section 6). In those cases, the dative constructions can be paraphrased by a phrase internal possessive. No aspectual effect arises in these cases:

(86) a. *Jonen adiskide bat joan da*
    Jon-g friend one-abs leave Aux-I
    ‘A friend of Jon left’

b. *Joni adiskide bat joan zaio*
    Jon-dat friend one leave Aux(dat-abs)
    ‘A friend of Jon left’

3.2. Alternating verbs

A few verbs show two auxiliary choices: *baliatu* “to be profitable for someone” and *atxeki* “to attach to, to stick”, for instance, take either an ergative-absolutive auxiliary or a dative-absolutive one:

(87) a. *Hori baliatu zaio*
    that-abs profit-partc Aux(dat-abs)
    ‘That was profitable to him’

b. *Hori baliatu du*
    that-abs profit-partc Aux-T
    ‘He made that profitable’

(88) a. *Atxiki zaio*
    stick-partc Aux(dat-abs)
    ‘It sticked to him’

b. *Atxiki du*
    stick-partc Aux-T
    ‘He retained it’

When in the ergative/absolutive pattern those verbs mean, respectively, “to make something profitable” and “to retain”. Only the former gives rise to a causative meaning in its transitive variant. One noun+auxiliary construction that is not a mental state also shows the same kind of alternation as (88): *eskas falta* +auxiliary “to lack” (89).

(89) a. *Zopak gatza falta du*
    soup-erg salt-abs lack Aux-T
    ‘The soup needs salt’

b. *Zopari gatza falta zaio*
    Soup-dat salt-abs lack Aux(dat-abs)
    ‘The soup lacks salt’

A handful of verbs such as *jarraitu* “to follow” and *jazarri* “to rebel” use both the dative-absolutive and the ditransitive auxiliaries interchangeably. The historical record shows that those verbs were originally employed only with the dative-absolutive auxiliary. The ditransitive auxiliary has imposed in the last couple of centuries. *Jariatu* “to spill” admits indistinctly both the dative-absolutive and the transitive (ergative-absolutive) auxiliaries. In its synthetic form, the dative-absolutive is the most common, although some varieties admit transitive bipersonal forms:
a. Zauriari  odola dario
   wound-dat blood spill(dat-abs)
   ‘The wound bleeds’

b. Etxeetako tximiniak  kea  dariote
   houses-g chimney-erg smoke spill(erg-abs)
   ‘The chimneys of the houses send up smoke’

Some noun+auxiliary constructions take the dative-absolutive auxiliary among a wider range of choices. For instance  *balio  +auxiliary “to be worth” and *axola +auxiliary “to matter”:

(91) a. Balio du
    value Aux-T
    ‘It is worth’

b. Balio zaio
    value Aux(dat-abs)
    ‘It is worth/useful for him’

c. Balio dio
    value Aux-DT
    ‘It is worth/useful for him’

3.3. An aspectual verb: *lotu

The verb *lotu, which has a transitive use as “to tie” has an aspectual use in its dative-absolutive form as “to engage in”:

(92) a. Lokarriak lotu         ditu
    ties-abs      tie-partc Aux-T
    ‘He tied his laces’

b. Lanari     lotu         zaio
    work-dat tie-partc Aux(dat-abs)
    ‘He tied himself to work (he engaged in working)’

4. Transitive Structures

4.1. Unergatives

A class of predicates in Basque takes the transitive auxiliary but typically prohibits, or severely constrains, the availability of an overt object. This class corresponds roughly to the class of unergative predicates of other languages (Perlmutter, 78; Burzio,1981, Levin,1983). Unergative predicates have an ergative subject, typical of transitive structures. Compare in this regard a standard transitive verb such as *erosi “to buy”, and an unergative verb such *distiratu “to shine”:

(93) a. Jonek etxe     berria   erosi du
    Jon-erg house new-D-abs buy-partc Aux-T
    ‘Jon bought a new house’

b. Lehioko   kristalak distiratu      du
    window-of glass-erg shine-partc Aux-T
    ‘The glass in the window shone’

c. *Kristalak lurra distiratu      du
    glass-erg floor shine-partc Aux-T
    ‘*The glass shone the floor (made the floor shine)’

Verbs of this sort are also  *dirdiratu “to glimmer”, *botatu (W) “to bounce”, *bozkatu “to vote”, *eskia “to sky”, *nabigatu “to navigate”, *txitatu (W) “to set on eggs”, *gogoetatu “to meditate”, *eutsi “to withstand”, *irakin “to boil”, *iraun “to persist”, *bazkaldu “to
lunch”, afaldu “to have dinner”, usaitu “to smell”.

When unergative verbs admit objects, they are either cognate objects (94), or in the case of motion verbs, complements indicating length (95):

(94) a. Gene Kelly-k dantza famatu bat dantzatzen du film horretan
Gene Kelly-erg dance famous one dance-ger Aux-T film that-loc
‘Gene Kelly dances a famous dance in that film’
b. Jolas polit bat jolastu zuten
play nice one play-partc Aux-T
‘They played a nice play’
c. Abraracourcix-ek borroka luze bat borrokatzen du istorio horretan
Abraracourcix-erg fight long one fight-ger Aux-T story that-loc
‘Abraracourcix fights a long fight in that story’

(95) a. Jauzilari kubarrak bi metro saltatu ditu
jumper cuban-erg two meters jump-partc aux-T(pl)
‘The cuban athlete jumped two meters’
b. Bi kilometro korritu ditut oinutsik
two kilometers run-partc Aux-T barefoot

Alternatively (and most commonly), unergative verbs in Basque are complex predicates, composed by a (typically) bare noun that specifies the kind of event involved, and a verb indicating action: egin “to do” (see section 4.6). Many unergative verbs can occur in either of those two forms (96). The possibility of having a cognate object disappears in the complex predicate alternate (Uribe-Etxebarria, 1989)(97):

(96) a. Jon ek korritu du
Jon-erg run-partc Aux-T
‘Jon ran’
b. Jon ek korri egin du
Jon-erg run do Aux-T
‘Jon ran’

(97) a. Jon ek dantza bat dantzatzu du
Jon-erg dance one dance-partc Aux-T
‘Jon danced a dance’
b. *Jon ek dantza bat dantzak egin du
Jon-erg dance one dance do Aux-T
‘Jon danced a dance’

The existence of complex predicates of the sort above has been adduced as evidence that unergative verbs are syntactically transitive, having a thematic object in their underlying representation (Hale&Keyser,91,93). The existence of such a correlation between syntactically transitive compound predicates and morphologically transitive simplex verbs, together with the case marking of the subject in simplex unergative predicates supports that idea. However, that correlation does not always hold: to some complex predicates formed with a bare noun or locative phrase (see section 4.6) and the verb egin “to do” correspond simplex verbs with intransitive auxiliaries and absolutive surface subjects. Among those are: hegatu “to fly” (<hegan/z
egan “wing-loc/instr do”), dardaratu “to tremble” (<dardar egin “trembling do”), irristatu “to slip” (<irrist egin “slip do”), behaztopatu “to stumble” (<behaztopa egin “stumble do”), solastu “to chat” (<solas(ean) egin “chat-(loc) do”) and zintzatu “to sneeze” (< zintz egin “to do sneeze”). Consider as an illustration (98):

(98)  a. Jonek solas(ean) egin du gurekin
     Jon-erg chat-loc do Aux-T us-with
     ‘Jon chatted with us’

b. Jon gurekin solastu da
     Jon-abs us-with chat-partc Aux-I
     ‘Jon chatted with us’

               c. Jon gurekin solastu du
     Jon-erg us-with chat-partc Aux-T
     ‘Jon chatted with us’

Other unergative verbs optionally admit an intransitive variant. These are: jolastu “to play”, borrokatu “to fight”, gudukatu “to war”, saltatu “to jump”, dantzatu “to dance”, barautu “to fasten”. An example is given in (99):

(99)  a. Jonek Urtainen kontra borrokatu du
     Jon-erg Urtain-g against fight-partc Aux-T
     ‘Jon fought against Urtain’

b. Jon Urtainen kontra borrokatu da
     Jon-abs Urtain-g against fight-partc Aux-T
     ‘Jon fought against Urtain’

All those verbs have also transitive structures with an overt object, where the object measures the length of the event (with jolastu, saltatu, dantzatu, barautu), as in (100), or the target of the event (with borrokatu and gudukatu), as in (101):

(100)  a. Jonek bi dantza dantzatu ditu
      Jon-erg two dance-abs dance-partc Aux-T
      ‘Jon danced two dances’

b. Berrogei egun eta berrogei gau barautu zituen
      forty day and forty night fasten-partc Aux-T
      ‘He fastened for forty days and forty nights’

(101)  a. Urtain borrokatu du Jonek
      Urtain-abs fight-partc Aux-T Jon-erg
      ‘Jon fought Urtain’

b. Gu baino sendoagarik ez dugu ba gudukatuko
     us than stronger-part neg aux-T then war-partc-fut
     ‘We want war those who are stronger than us, then’

For some authors (Grimshaw, 90; Pustejovsky, 92,95), the class of unergative predicates must be associated to a given aspectual configuration. Unergative predicates would be aspectual processes (Vendler, 1967; Dowty 1979, Verkuyl, 93 and references therein): verbs denoting an activity of indefinite length. For Grimshaw, the partial analogy between process denoting unergatives and prototypical transitive
accomplishments is derived from the fact that they share a process subpart. Accomplishments are complex events involving both a process subpart, that counts as the event bringing about a state, and a state subpart, denoting the result of the causation process. Agents and causes are typically related to the process subpart of a complex event, and they are mapped as the most prominent grammatical function: as (non-derived) subjects. If unergatives are processes, their single argument will be mapped as a non-derived, ergative subject too. Although such a proposal would explain the fact that all unergative verbs which are morphologically transitive are actually aspectual processes (see the list above), it fails to account for the fact that some of them either are, or can optionally be, intransitive. At least under the assumption that ergative Case should be invariably linked to non-derived subjects. It is also worth noting that the set of complex predicates, according to this characterization of unergative predicates, is actually larger than the set of aspectual processes. Complex predicates such as behaztopa egin “to stumble”, irrist/labab egin “to slip” or zintz egin “to sneeze” are not aspectual processes. Interestingly, all those have intransitive simple counterparts.

Levin&Rappaport (1995) propose to derive the class of unergative verbs from the notion of “internally caused event”. In internally caused eventualities, some property inherent to the argument of the verb is “responsible” for bringing about the eventuality. This is immediately clear in the case of verbs such as korritu “to run” or bozkatu “to vote”, that depend on the volition or will of the agent who performs that activity. Levin &Rappaport extend it also to verbs such as distiratu “to shine” or irakin “to boil” which are not agentive. Those verbs can be taken to describe internally caused eventualities because those eventualities arise from internal properties (material structure) of the arguments. In Basque, the correlation between internally caused event and transitive auxiliary is not clear-cut. Events which are externally or internally caused (in the sense of Levin and Rappaport) require the intransitive auxiliary (dardaratu “to tremble”, hegatu, hegaldatu “to fly”, solastu “to chat”, zintzatu “to sneeze”) whereas others optionally take it: jolastu “to play”, borrokatu “to fight”, gudukatu “to war”, dantzatu “to dance”. Although those verbs either do not take or do not necessarily take the transitive auxiliary, a diagnostic for unergativity in Basque, they do not allow (lexical) causative variants either, as other standard intransitive verbs do. This is a standard test for unergativity (Hale&Keyser, 1993, and references therein):

(102) a. *Berriak Mikel dardaratu du  
    news-erg Mikel-abs tremble-partc Aux-T  
    ‘The news trembled Mikel (made Mikel tremble)’

b. *Ehiztariak aztorea hegatu du  

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12 To derive their causatives we need an extra causative affix: -erazi. As an illustration:

(ii) Berriak Mikel dardara-erazi du  
    News-erg Mikel-abs tremble-cause Aux-T  
    ‘The news made Mikel tremble’
4.2. Causative/Inchoative Alternation

This transitivity alternation affects typically those change of state verbs that are constructed out of adjectives such as *garbi* “clean”, *ilun* “obscure”, *argi* “clear”, *zikin* “dirty” or *arin* “light”. The alternation can be transparently described by adding a causative layer to the intransitive counterpart. For instance *garbitu* “to clean”:

(103) a. Garbitu da
    clean-partc Aux-I
 b. Garbitu du
    clear-partc Aux-T
‘It became clean’    ‘Someone cleaned it (made it become clean)’

Other verbs not derived from adjectives can also produce this alternation. For instance, verbs of directed motion:

(104) a. Xabier sartu da
    Xabier enter Aux-I
 b. Xabierrek kotxea sartu du
    Xabier-Erg car-Abs enter aux-T
(105) a. Xabier atera da
    Xabier get out Aux-I
 b. Xabierrek kotxea atera du
    Xabier-Erg car-Abs take out Aux-T

Also all those verbs constructed from a noun specifying the endpoint of a motion and an adlative suffix that encodes direction:

(106) a. Etxe-ra-tu da
    home-to-partc Aux-I
 b. Norbait etxe-ra-tu du
    someone home-to-partc Aux-T
‘He went home’    ‘He took someone home’
(107) a. Oheratu da
    bed-to-partc Aux-I
 b. Norbait oheratu du
    someone bed-to-partc Aux-T
‘He went to bed’    ‘He put someone to bed’

4.3. Monovalent transitive structures with measuring objects

A few transitive verbs admit monovalent structures in which the object measures out the event. Some of them require a locative or a comitative phrase that denotes an activity. The verbs in question are *eman* “to give”, *egin* “to do”, and *bete* “to fill”.

(108) a. Dirua eman du
    money give Aux-T
‘He/she gave money’
 b. Urteak eman ditu horretan
    years-abs give Aux-T that-in
‘He/she spent years on that’
(109) a. Zerbait egin du
    something do Aux-T
‘He/she did something’
 b. Egunak egin ditu horrekin
    days-abs do Aux-T that-with
‘He spent days with that’
(110) a. Botila bete du
    Aux-T
 b. Zigorra bete du
bottle-abs fill Aux-T (prison) term-abs accomplish Aux-T
‘He filled the bottle’ ‘He accomplished his prison term’

4.4. Locative alternation
A few transitive verbs give rise to a locative alternation of the spray-load type (from Rebuschi, 82, p.347):

(111) a. *Patxik soroaan garia erein du*
    Patxi-erg field-in wheat-abs sow Aux-T
    ‘Patxi sowed wheat in the field’
b. *Patxik soroa gariz erein du*
    Patxi-erg field-abs wheat-instr sow Aux-T
    ‘Patxi sowed the field with wheat’

(112) a. *Patxik sagarrak kamioian kargatu ditu*
    Patxi-erg apples-abs truck-in load Aux-T(pl.abs)
    ‘Patxi loaded the apples in the truck’
b. *Patxik kamioia sagarrez kargatu zuen*
    Patxi-erg truck-abs apple-instr load Aux-T(sing.abs)
    ‘Patxi loaded the truck with apples’

4.5. Pit -verbs
A small class of verbs of change of state, all of them related to growing, gives rise to a puzzling alternation. In this alternation, the transitive counterpart is interpreted as expressing a removal of the thing growed. Consider for instance the following unaccusative verbs:

(113) a. *Artaburuak aletu dira*
    corn-ears-abs pit-partc Aux-I
    ‘The corn (ears of) grew pits’
b. *Adarrak kimatu dira*
    Branches-abs bud-partc Aux-I
    ‘The branches budded’
c. *Txitak lumatu dira*
    chicks-abs grew-feathers-partc Aux-I
    ‘The chicks grew feathers’

(114) a. *Artaburuak aletu dituzte*
    corn-abs pit-partc Aux-T
    ‘They pitted the corn’
b. *Adarrak kimatu dituzte*
    branches-abs trim-partc Aux-T
    ‘They trimmed the branches’
c. *Txitak lumatu dituzte*
    chicks-abs pluck-partc Aux-T
    ‘They plucked the chicks’

Not all verbs of growing give rise to this alternation: *lilitu* “to flower”, *loratu* “to bloom”, *abartu* “to grow branches”, *hostatu*, *orritu* “to sprout leaves” do not admit it, although all of them have zero-related nominals (*abar* “branch”, *hosto*, *orri* “leave”). A
relation of inalienable possession or part-whole underlies this alternation (see Levin, 1993, p.130, for the same alternation in English). But that condition alone doesn’t seem to exclude inexisten potential cases such as *abartu “to remove branches”, or *hostatu “to remove leaves”.

4.6. Complex predicates
4.6.1. Complex predicates with egin

4.6.1.1. Basic pattern

Basque has a very productive way of creating new predicates out of the combination of the verb egin “to do” and a bare nominal indicating the kind of action entertained. These complex predicates are typically equivalent to unergative predicates of other languages (Levin, 1983; Ortiz de Urbina, 1989; Uribe-Etxebarria, 1989; Laka, 1993). The result is a syntactically transitive construction, whose subject is marked Ergative:

(115) a. Jon- Erg work do-Gen Aux-T
Jon works’
b. Mikelek salto egin du
Mikel-Erg jump do Aux-T
‘Mikel jumped’

Here is sample of predicates formed in this way:

A. Verbs of emission:
a.1. Verbs of sound emission:
   Auhen egin “to lament (to do lament)” ,deiadar egin “to scream (to do scream)
   ,intziri egin “to moan (to do moan)”, uhuri/ulu egin “to howl (to do howl)” , hasperen
   egin “to sigh (to do sigh)” , oihu egin “to yell (to do yell)”, negar egin “to cry (to do
cry)”, orro egin “to roar (to do roar)”, marriska egin “to meow (to do meow)” , irri egin
   “to laugh (to do laugh)” , kirrinka egin “to creak (to do creak)”.

a.2. Light emission:
   Dir-dir egin “to shine” , diz-diz egin “to glow, to sparkle”, nir-nir egin “to
twinker, flicker”.

a.3. Verbal emission:
   Birao egin “to blaspheme (to do blaspheme)”, burla egin “to make fun” , errieta
   egin , agiraka egin “to reprehend” , oles egin “to summon” , marmar egin “to grunt” , dei
   egin, hots egin “to call” , zin egin “to swear”.

B. Internal body motion:
   Dar-dar egin “to tremble (to do tremble)” , bor-bor egin “to boil noisily (to do
boiling noise)”.
C. Physical activities

C.1. Actions against an object or an individual:

-Ausiki egin “to bite (to do bite)” , tiro egin “to shoot (to do shoot)” , bultza egin “to push (to do push)” , saka egin “to press, to push, to shove (to do press, etc)” , indar egin “to make an effort”, gogor egin “to struggle (to do force)” , buru egin “to face, to hold (to do head)” , zitz egin “to puncture (to do puncture)” , laztan egin “to caresse (to do caress)” , putz egin “to blow (to do blow)” , iskin egin “to elude (to do corner)”.

C.2. Motion verbs:

-Laster/korri egin “to run (to do run)” , ihes egin “to flee (to do flee)” , salto egin “to jump (to do jump)” , igeri egin “to swim (to do swim)” , hanka egin “to escape rapidly (to do leg)” , alde egin “to leave (to do distance)” , zirkin egin “to move (to do move)”.

C.3. Bodily functions:

-Aharrausi egin “to yawn (to do yawn)” , kaka egin “to shit (to do shit)” , txiza egin “to urinate (to do urine)” , zintz egin “to blow one’s nose” , izerdi egin “to sweat “to do sweat” , usin egin “to sneeze (to do sneeze)” , arnas egin “to breath “to do breath”, hatz egin “to scratch (to do finger)” , lo egin “to sleep (to do sleep)”.

D. Mental activities

-Duda egin “to doubt (to do doubt)” , gogoeta egin “to meditate (to do meditation)” , hausnar egin “to ruminate (fig.) (to do rumination)” , kasu egin “to pay attention (to do attention)” , kontu egin “to take into account (to do count)” , hitz/berba egin “to talk (to do talk)” , otoitz egin “to pray (to do pray)” , amets egin “to dream (to do dream)” , solas egin “to chat (to do chat)”.

E. Behavioral verbs:

-Axut/desafio egin “to challenge (to do challenge)” , mehatxu egin “to threaten (to do threaten)” , planto egin “to stop by refusing to follow a game (to do stop)” , paso egin (W) “to be uninterested (to do pass)” , muzin egin “to be unfriendly, disdainful (to do a disdain gesture)”.

Not all complex predicates with egin require a bare nominal. Some of them require a locative or an adverbial (-ka or -z):

(116) a. Haginka egin dit tooth-Adv do Aux-DT ‘It bite me’

Finally, some of those complex predicates admit, but do not require, a structure such as the one above with a locative or adverbial complement:

(117) a. Dantza(n) egin dute dance-loc do Aux-T ‘They danced’
    b. Laster(ka) egin dute run-adv do Aux-T ‘They ran’
b. Borroka(n) egin dute
fight-loc do Aux-T
'They fought'

c. Oihu(ka) egin dute
scream-adv do Aux-T
'They screamed, yelled'

d. Errieta(n) egin dute
dispute-loc do Aux-T
'They disputed'

e. Jauzi(ka)/salto(ka) egin dute
jump-adv do Aux-T
'They jumped'

In these cases, the event denoted by the complex predicate takes on an iterative meaning: it is implied that those events happened once and again in a given time.

4.6.1.2. Syntax

These complex predicates are not instances of incorporation of the polisynthetic sort. As shown by Uribe-Etxebarria (1989), Ortiz de Urbina (1989), and (Laka, 93), the bare nominal and the verb *egin* can be separated by a number of syntactic operations (118), and the bare nominal can take partitive Case (119). To this we should also add the facts above: patterns which involve postpositional complements, arguably phrasal objects.

Not all complex predicates admit partitive marked bare nominals. Only those complex predicates denoting delimited events can. For instance, *eztul egin* “cough” and *zirkin egin* “move” can, as can also *huts egin* “to miss”, *tiro egin* “to shoot”, *behaztopa egin* “to stumble”, *birao egin* “to blaspheme”, *salto egin* “to jump”, *auhen egin* “to face”, *gogor egin* “to retaliate”. Achievements do not admit partitives either: light emission verbs, such as *dir-dir egin* “to shine”, *nir-nir egin* “to glimmer”, aspectual activities such as *bultza egin* “to push”, *laster egin* “to run”, *tiro egin* “to shoot”, *hatz egin* “to scratch”, *gongoeta egin* “to think, to meditate”, *solas egin* “to chat”, *buru egin* “to face”, *gogor egin* “to retaliate”.

Activities with no clear delimiting point do not take the partitive: light emission verbs, such as *dir-dir egin* “to shine”, *nir-nir egin* “to glimmer”, aspectual activities such as *bultza egin* “to push”, *laster egin* “to run”, *tiro egin* “to shoot”, *hatz egin* “to scratch”, *gogoeta egin* “to think, to meditate”, *solas egin* “to chat”, *buru egin* “to face”, *gogor egin* “to retaliate”. The behavior of other verbs is harder to elucidate: *amets egin* “to dream”, *lo egin* “to sleep” admit the partitive, as do other mental activity verbs, such as *kasu egin* “to pay attention”, *kontu egin* “to take into account” and *duda egin* “to doubt”. Finally, what I called behavioral verbs, such as *pasago egin* “to show indifference”, *planto egin* “to stop (in a card game)”, *muzin egin* “to reject”, *mehatxu egin* “to threaten”, *desafio egin* “to defy” do not admit a partitive nominal. Activity verbs of speaking such as *hitza egin* “to talk” do admit partitive objects.

Complex predicates of the nominal+egin sort behave as transitive verbs in this regard:

(i) a. Nik zorrak pagatu ditut
I-erg debts-abs pay-partc Aux-T
'I paid debts'
b. Niri zorrak pagaerazi dizkidate
I-dat debts-abs pay-cause Aux-DT
'They made me pay debts'

(ii) a. Jonek dantza egin du
Jon-erg dance do Aux-T
'Jon danced'

Ortiz de Urbina (1989, p. 47) provides another important argument in favor of viewing those bare nominals as true arguments: they behave as canonical arguments in causative formation. Subjects of trnasitive verbs appear as indirect objects of causativized structures.
(118) a. Jonek dantza egin du
   Jon-Erg dance do Aux-T
   ‘Jon danced’
b. Nork egin du dantza? (wh-questions)
   who do Aux-T dance
   ‘Who danced?’
c. JONEK egin du dantza (focus movement)
   Jon-Erg do Aux-T dance
   ‘JON danced’
d. DANTZA egin du Jonek
   dance do Aux-T Jon-Erg
   ‘Jon DANCED’
e. Dantza, Jonek EGITEN du
   dance Jon-Erg do-freq Aux-T
   ‘As for dancing, Jon does dance’

(119) a. Ez du zirkinik egiten
   neg Aux move-part do-prog
   ‘He doesn’t move (at all)’
b. Ez du eztulik egin
   neg Aux-T cough-part do
   ‘He didn’t cough (a single time)’

4.6.1.3. Simple counterparts of complex predicates

Many of the complex predicates with egin have simplex verbal counterparts:

(120) a. Jonek dantza egin du    b. Jonek dantzatu du
    Jon-Erg dance do Aux-T    Jon-Erg dance-partc Aux-T
    ‘Jon danced’    ‘Jon danced’

Simplex verbs can take cognate objects, complex predicates cannot:

b. Joni dantza eginarazi diote
   Jon-dat dance do-cause Aux-DT
   ‘They made Jon dance’

The same is not the case with simple unergatives:

(iii) a. Jonek dantzatu du
     Jon-erg dance-partc Aux-T
b. Jon dantzara dute
   Jon-abs dance-cause Aux-T
   ‘They made Jon dance’
c. Joni dantzara diote
   Jon-dat dance-cause Aux-DT
   ‘They made Jon dance’
There is also an aspectual difference between complex predicates and their corresponding simplex verbs that can be described in the following terms: whereas the complex predicate describes an attempted action without specifying whether the action affected the object, the simplex verb denotes an action that affects the object:

(121) a. *Jonek dantza bat dantzatu du
   Jon-Erg dance a dance-partc Aux-T
   ‘Jon danced a dance’
b. *Jonek dantza bat dantza egin du
   Jon-Erg dance a dance do Aux-T
   ‘Jon danced a dance’

Simple verbs are almost always conjugated with a transitive auxiliary (the only exception being lehertu “to explode”), but they differ on whether they admit an overt object or not and on whether the object is a cognate object (a pure extension of the meaning of the predicate) or not. They also differ in the interpretation of ditransitive structures if they have one available. Cognate verbs can thus be divided into four classes. The first class is constituted by those verbs that take a cognate object, such as dantzatu “to dance”, jolastu “to play”, and borrokatu “to fight”. When the verb does not have an overt object, and gives rise to a simple activity reading, it alternates freely
between an intransitive or an intransitive auxiliary:

(125) a. Jolas bat jolastu du
play one play-partc Aux-T
‘John played a game’

b. Jolastu du
play-partc Aux-T
‘Jon played’

c. Jolastu da
play-partc Aux-I
‘Jon played’

The second class corresponds to the simplex equivalents of physical activity verbs such as bultza egin “to push” (bultzatu) and saka egin “to push” (sakatu) or verbs or verbal emission such as dei egin (deitu) “to call”. Those verbs can be conjugated with the transitive and the ditransitive auxiliary. The choice of the ditransitive produces a non-affected reading of the sort we discussed for the complex predicate form:

(126) a. Mikel bazterrera bultzatu du
Mikel corner-to push-partc Aux-T
‘He pushed Mikel to the corner’

b. Mikeli (*bazterrera) bultzatu dio
Mikel-Dat corner-to push-partc Aux-DT
‘He pushed at Mikel (*to the corner)’

The third class comprehends a few verbs that have transitive morphology but no overt object. They correspond to aspectual activities such as dudatu “to doubt” (dudatu) or iraun “persist, to stand”:

(127) a. (*Hori) dudatu dut
that doubt Aux-T
‘I doubted that’

b. Iraun dut
stand Aux-T
‘I stood’

Finally, we have the class of predicates that can take an object or not. They are aspectual activities, on which an overt object imposes a boundary:

(128) a. Bi metro saltatu ditu
two meters jump-partc Aux-T
‘he jumped two meters’

b. Saltatu du
jump-partc Aux-T
‘He jumped’

(129) a. Bi kilometro korritu ditu
two kilometers run-partc Aux-T
‘He ran two kilometers’

b. Korritu du
run-partc Aux-T
‘He ran’

There is also a group that corresponds to those verbs which necessarily take an object: laztandu (<laztan egin) “XXX”, mindu (<min egin) “to hurt”, birrindu (birrin-birrin egin) “to powder”, txikitu (<txiki-txiki egin) “to break into little pieces”, ausiki (ausiki egin) “to bite”. Those can be considered as transitive verbs. It is further evidence for

Perhaps we could place in this context a dialectal distinction in the auxiliary choice of jardun “to be busy with, to spend time in”, which takes an intransitive auxiliary in some western varieties and a transitive one in others.
the idea that complex predicate formation is in itself a process larger than unergative predicate formation.

4.6.2. Other complex predicates
4.6.2.1. Noun + hartu (take)

Other complex predicates are formed by a bare noun and the verb hartu “to take”. Those are: min hartu “to get hurt (lit. to take pain)”, aitseden hartu “to rest (lit. to take rest)”, gain hartu “to dominate, to surpass”, hats hartu “to breathe (lit. to take breath)”, hitz hartu “to compromise (lit. to take word) and kargu hartu “to reproach (to take charge)”. Syntactically, they behave exactly as the complex predicates with egin:: the parts of the predicate can be separated by a number of syntactic rearrangements, such as wh-movement:

(130) Nork hartu du min?
Who-erg pain Aux-T pain 'He/she hurt him/her in two minutes

4.6.2.2. Noun + eman (give)

A last class of complex predicates is formed by a bare noun and the verb eman “to give”: aurpegi eman “to face (to give face)”, buru eman “to counter(to give head)”, begi eman “to look at (to give eye)”, amore eman “to surrender (to give surrender)”, antz eman “to notice (to give look)”, min eman “to hurt(to give pain)”, bide eman “to cede passage (to give way)”, bihotz eman “to encourage (to give heart)”, hitz eman “to promise (to give word)”, musu eman “to kiss (to give face/kiss”. Those complex predicates show different degrees of coalescence: while hitzeman cannot be separated, min eman for instance can be separated by all sorts of syntactic operation, as most egin - predicates do. As the complex predicates with hartu, these are also incompatible with accomplishment adverbials, but most of them (leaving aside hitzeman ) are compatible with a duration adverbial. Most of these predicates (all except hitzeman and amore eman) are conjugated with the ditransitive auxiliary, differently from regular instances of eman + object, which do not require it:

(131) a. Jonek antz eman dio/*du
Jon-Erg look give Aux-DT/T 'Jon noticed it'

b. Jonek min eman dio/*du
Jon-Erg pain give Aux-DT/T 'Jon hurt him'

4.7. Psychological predicates

If we follow auxiliary selection, we have three classes of psychological predicates in Basque. We have those predicates that select an auxiliary with Dative and absolutive agreeing morphemes (typically, Belletti&Rizzi’s piacere class), those which are invariable transitive, with absolutive-ergative agreement (corresponding to the temere or fear class of other languages), and finally, those which vary between an intransitive (absolutive agreement) and a transitive (absolutive and ergative agreement)
auxiliary, and which we could take as equivalent to the preoccupare frighten class of other languages. The latter class is special in typological terms, since it gives rise to causative-inchoative alternations that are not possible with prototypical verbs of the preoccupare class elsewhere (Zubizarreta, 1987).

4.7.1. Dative-Absolutive constructions
Absolutive-Dative auxiliaries go together with verbs that typically form the piacere class in other languages. In these cases, the experiencer receives Dative Case, and surfaces as the subject of the sentence. Verbs in this class comprehend: gustatu, laketu (E) “to like”, interesatu “to interest”, dolutu “to repent”, damutu “to repent”, bururatu, otu “to occur to, to come to mind”, and gaitzitu (E) “to be offensive to”. All of them except gustatu, bururatu and otu, can also select an absolutive agreeing auxiliary. In that case, the experiencer takes absolutive Case and the stimulus becomes a postpositional phrase (instrumental or locative):

(132) a. Hori damutu/dolutu zaio          b. Horretaz damutu/dolutu da
that-abs regret-partc Aux-dat-abs that-instr regret-partc Aux-I
(133) a. Interesatu zaio            b. Horretan interesatu da
interest-partc Aux-dat-abs          that-in interest-partc Aux-I
‘It interested him’                 ‘He gor interested in it’
(134) a. Laketu zaio            b. Laketu da
like-partc Aux-dat-abs             like-partc Aux-I
‘He liked it’                       ‘He became fond of it’
like/occur Aux-dat-abs             like-partc/occur-partc Aux-I
‘He liked it/it occurred to him’

4.7.2. Purely transitive constructions (Ergative-Absolutive)
In these constructions, the experiencer always occurs as the ergative subject, and the stimulus as the absolutive object. This class is equivalent to the temere/fear class of other languages. Verbs in this class comprehend: etsi “to desperate, to resignate”, miretsi “admire”, ederretsi, gurtu “to worship, to revere”, gutxietsi “to despise”, gaitzetsi “to condemn”, onetsi “to accept”, estimatu “to esteem, to appreciate”, errespetatu “to respect”, desiratu “to desire”, irrikatu “to yearn for”, ametitu/onartu “to admit, to accept”, eraman “to bear”:

(136) a. Jon ek estimatzen zaitu b. Jon eskeintza onartu du
Jon-Erg appreciates Aux-T          Jon-Erg offer-Abs accept Aux-T
‘Jon appreciates you’              ‘Jon accepted the offer’

Verbs in this class differ in their aspectual configuration: whereas verbs such as errespetatu, desiratu, irrikatu, and eraman, are purely stative verbs, others such as gutxietsi, gaitzetsi, onetsi, onartu and even ederretsi, involve a judgement process and an endstate, the result or veredict of the judgement process. All of them are morphologically complex, having an adjective that marks the result of the judging
process and a judgement verb such as etsi “consider” or hartu “take (for)”:

(137)  

Onetsi < on  “good” + etsi “consider”  
Ederretsi < eder  “beatiful”+ etsi  
Gaitzetsi < gaitz  “bad” + etsi  
Gutxietsi < gutxi “little” + etsi  
Onartu < on  “good”+hartu “to take”  

The two sets of predicates differ in their interpretation when they take a participial form. The set in (137) can receive a punctual interpretation, the others cannot:

(138)  

a. Proposamena goizeko bilkuran onetsi/onartu dute  
proposal-abs morning-of meeting-loc accept-partc Aux-T  
‘They accepted the offer in this morning’s meeting’  
b. Abertzale gehieneek atentatua gaitzetsi dute  
nationalist most-erg terrorist act-abs condemn-partc Aux-T  
‘Most nationalists condemned the terrorist action’  
c. Ehun urte eta gero, pintura zahar horiek ederretsi dituzte  
hundred year and then painting old those-abs consider beautiful Aux-T  
‘One hundred years later, they have considered those old pictures as beatiful’  

(139)  

a. *Jonek hori atzo irrikatu/desiratu zuen  
Jon-erg that-abs yesterday desire-partc Aux-T  
‘*Jon desired that yesterday’  
b. Jonek ez du hori eraman  
Jon-erg neg Aux-T that-abs bring  
‘Jon didn’t bring that/*Jon didn’t bear that (yesterday)’  
c. Jonek ezin du hori eraman  
Jon-erg cannot Aux-T that bear  
‘Jon cannot bear/stand that’  

Some non-complex verbs such as errespetatu and adoratu , can have complex events readings, with a process part and a resultant state. With those verbs there is a clear difference in interpretation between the perfective and imperfective forms. The state readings are only possible with imperfective forms, whereas the perfective forms denote either activities or accomplishments:

(140)  

a. Jon adoratzen dute han  
Jon-abs adore-imperf Aux-T there  
‘They adore Jon there’  
b. Haurtxoa adoratu dute  
little child-abs worship-partc Aux-T  
‘They have worshipped the child Jesus’  
‘They worship Jon, there’  

The complex event reading implies that the subject engages in some action that counts as the stative attitude towards the object. Consider for instance errespetatu “to respect”. Again the state reading is only possible with imperfective forms, whereas the perfective form is interpreted as “showing respect”:  

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4.7.3. Transitive-Intransitive Psych-verbs (Ergative-Absolutive and Absolutive)

This class comprehends those verbs that have a causative reading when conjugated with the transitive auxiliary, and where the stimulus is mapped as the ergative subject of the sentence. This class corresponds to the preoccupare-frighten class of other languages. They are verbs of mental change of state. Verbs in the preoccupare-frighten class can be divided into two subclasses: on the one hand, those verbs that can be conjugated with both the intransitive and the transitive auxiliary; on the other, those verbs that only admit intransitive auxiliaries. Verbs that enter into the alternating subclass are: asaldatu “to scare, to be scared, perturbed” nerbiostu/urduritu “to excite, to get (someone) nervous”, harritu “to surprise, to get surprised”, txunditu “to astound, to get astounded”, aspertu “to bore, to get bored”, kontsolatu “to comfort, console (oneself)”, piztu “to hearten”, alaitu “to make/become merry”, poztu “to make/become joyful”, zapuztu “to frustrate, get frustrated”, kezkatu “to worry, to become worried”, gogoratu “to remember”, zoratu “to madden”, haserratu “to angry, to become angry”, liluratu “to dazzle”, azloratu “to confuse, get confused”, nahastu “to tire (mentally)”.

All these verbs have transitive and intransitive alternates. They are verbs derived in the most part from either adjectives (urduri, nerbios “nervous”, alai “merry”, zoro “mad”, nahas “confusion, mess”) or nouns (kezka “worry”, beldur, ikara “fear”, lilura “dazzle”, poz “joy”, harri “stone”).

The class that only admits intransitive auxiliaries also involves a change of mental state, although they lack any causative meaning. They represent events whose only possible origin is in the mind of the experiencer: akordatu “to remember (casually), tematu, setatu “to become stubborn” (from the nouns tema “stubbornness”, and seta “obstinacy”) obsesionatu “to be obsessed”, lehiatu “to hurry”. All of them take a postpositional complement, indicating the target or the matter of the mental event:
4.7.4. Noun + Auxiliary constructions

Besides the verb+participle form, mental states can also be expressed through constructions that combine a noun and an auxiliary form. Depending on the mental state denoted by the noun, the auxiliary is of the ergative-absolutive form only, or alternates between an ergative-absolutive and an absolutive-dative form. Most noun+participle constructions have verb-participle counterparts. The difference between them is aspectual. Noun+auxiliary constructions are purely stative, whereas verb+participle constructions can have (depending on the aspectual mark they incorporate) all the range of aspectual meanings. Consider for an example the following pair:

(145) a. *Hura desira dut b. Gertatzea desira-tzen /-tu dut
that-abs desire Aux-T happen-abs desire-imperf/perf Aux-T
'I desire that' 'I desire/have desired that it happened'
(146) a. *Gertatzea desira ari naiz b. Gertatzea desiratzen ari naiz
happen-inf desire Ger Aux-I happen-inf desire Ger Aux-I
'I keep wishing for it to happen' 'I keep wishing for it to happen'

Also, the verbal form can occur without a patient argument, in generic contexts, unlike the noun plus auxiliary construction:

(147) a. Animaliek desio dute b. Animaliek desiatzen dute
animals-Erg desire Aux-T Animals-erg desire-gen Aux-T
'Animals desire it' 'Animals desire it'

'Animals (have the capacity to) desire'

Whereas reflexivization through auxiliary selection is possible with the verbal form (at least for some speakers), the noun+auxiliary form obligatorily requires an overt reflexive phrase:

(148) a. Jon ker burua gorroto du b. *Jon gorroto da
Jon-er his head hate Aux-T Jon-abs hate Aux-I
'Jon hates himself' 'Jon hates himself'
(149) a. Jon ker burua gorrotatzen du b. Jon gorrotatzen da
The reflexivization facts suggest that the structure of the noun+Aux construction is that of a small clause, where the absolutely marked argument is an argument of the noun, and not of the auxiliary edun “have”:

(150)  Xabierrek [musika hori gorroto] du
       Xabier-erg music that hate Aux-T
       ‘Xabier hates that music’

Remember that reflexivization by intransitivizing the verb was only possible when identity of referential indexes was established between coarguments (see section 2.9). The fact that such a process is not possible with the bare nominal construction suggests that the absolutely marked argument is not an argument of have. If this is correct, then this is a raising construction, and the agreement and Case properties of the apparent object are acquired via extraction from an embedded sentential structure. Agreement (in number) is obligatory with the object:

(151)  Xabierrek barazkiak gorroto ditu
       Xabier-erg vegetables hate Aux-T-plural
       ‘Xabier hates vegetables’

Nouns expressing modal notions, such as nahi “want”, behar “need”, asmo “intention” and gogo “wish” select for infinitival and/or participial complements (Lafitte, 1944; Artiagoitia, Ortiz de Urbina, this volume). When those nouns take a participial clause, the arguments of the participial clause agree with the matrix auxiliary (Ormazabal, 1991). When the complement is a nominalized clause (the “infinitival”), then there is no agreement between the arguments of the embedded, nominalized verb and the matrix auxiliary. The participial construction provides further evidence for the idea of raising of arguments in modal periphrasis:

(152)  a. Xabierrek [barazkiak erosi] nahi ditu
        Xabier-erg vegetables-abs buy-partc want Aux-T-plural
        ‘Xabier wants to buy vegetables’

b. Xabierrek [barazkiak erostea] nahi du
    Xabier-erg vegetables-abs buy-nom-Det want Aux-T-sing
    ‘Xabier wants someone else to buy vegetables’

As the translations show, the choice of a participial or a nominalized clause complement has other effects besides agreement: the nominalized clause admits overt subjects, and subject reference is always disjoint. Participlal clauses do not admit overt subjects, and the reference of the implicit subject is always the same as the matrix subject (Ormazabal, 1991; Artiagoitia, this volume)
Nouns expressing mental states that are followed by an ergative-absolutive auxiliary only comprehend: *maite* “love”, *plazer* “pleasure”, *susmo* “suspicion”, *amets* “dream”, *asmo* “plan, purpose”, *desira* “desire”, *erruki* “pity”, *gupida* “mercy”, *irriki* “vehement desire”, *hastio*, *gorroto* “hate”. Also in this group are nouns expressing modality: *nahi* “want”, *behar* “necessity, need” and (somewhat literary) *gogo* “wish”, which are constructed following the noun + auxiliary pattern. The object in those cases can be either a participial or a noun phrase (the latter only *nahi* and *behar*):

(153) a. Hori *nahi/behar* dut \\
    that-abs want/need Aux-T \\
    ‘I want/need that’ \\

b. Hori bisitatu *nahi/behar* dut \\
    that-abs visit-partc want/need Aux-T \\
    ‘I want/need to visit that’

c. Hori *bisitatu* *gogo* du \\
    that-abs visit-partc wish Aux-T \\
    ‘He wishes to visit that’

_Behar_ actually behaves either as an auxiliary verb, with no effect on the transitivity of the verb, or as a bare noun predicate, forcing a small clause structure:

(154) a. *Egin behar* du/*da \\
    do need Aux-T/I \\
    ‘He needs to do it’

b. *Joan behar* du/da \\
    go need Aux-T/I \\
    ‘He needs to go’

The same alternation affects reflexivization, as one would expect. Take an inherent reflexive such as *garbitu* “to wash”. Reflexivization via intransitivization is only possible with *behar* as an auxiliary, but not as a bare nominal forcing a small clause structure:

(155) a. *Xabier bota behar* da (reflexive) \\
    Xabier throw must Aux-I \\
    ‘Xabier must throw himself’

b. *Xabierrek bota behar* du (non-reflexive) \\
    Xabier-erg throw must aux-T \\
    ‘Xabier must throw something’

c. *Xabierrek bere burua Zubiazpian* bota *behar* du/*da \\
    Xabier-erg his head-abs under the bridge throw must Aux-T/I \\
    ‘Xabier must throw himself under the bridge’

Nouns expressing mental states that are followed by either an ergative-absolutive auxiliary or an absolutive-dative one are: *atsegin*, *laket* “pleasure”, *higuin* “loathing”:

(156) a. *Nik hori atsegin* dut \\
    I-erg that-abs pleasure Aux-Erg-Abs \\
    ‘I like that’

b. *Hori atsegin* zait \\
    that-abs pleasure Aux-Dat-Abs \\
    ‘That pleases me’

In (156a), the experiencer is the ergative subject and the stimulus is the absolutive
object. In (156b), the stimulus is the absolutive object, and the experiencer is the dative subject. The alternance is reminiscent of the difference between the temere class and the piacere class.

Nouns expressing mental states that are followed by an intransitive auxiliary only are: *lotsa*, *ahalke* “shame” and *fio* “trust”. Their complements are respectively, genitive and instrumental (section 2.2. also, and Zabala, this volume):

(157) a. **Horren lotsa naiz** b. **Horretaz fio naiz**
    that-of shame Aux-I that-about trust Aux-I
    ‘I am ashamed of that’ ‘I trust that’

Some oriental dialects have besides mental state nouns followed by either an intransitive or an ergative-absolutive auxiliary are: *aiher* “inclination” and *herabe* “reluctance”.

(158) a. **Herabe naiz hori egitera** b. **Herabe dut hori egitera**
    reluctance Aux-I that do-inf-to reluctance Aux-T that-abs do-inf-to
    ‘I am reluctant to do that’ ‘I am reluctant to do so’

Finally, some mental state nouns are followed by *egon* “to be in a location” (Cf. Section 2.2): those are *beldur* “fear” and *haserre* “anger”.

(159) **Haserre/Beldur daude**
    Anger / fear are-in a location
    ‘They are angry/fearful’

4.8. Aspectual verbs
Biscayan varieties of Basque have a morphologically transitive aspectual verb *eroan* “to carry” that contributes a frequentative meaning. It is conjugated synthetically always, and follows a participial form:

(160) a. **Eman daroat**
    Give carry-T(erg-abs)
    ‘I usually give it’

5. Ditransitive Structures
5.1. Trivalent ditransitive
In this group we insert all those verbs that can increase their valency with the addition of a dative marked argument realising the role of recipient or beneficiary. They all have therefore a more basic transitive bivalent use. I exclude from the group those ditransitives which encode a possession relation between the dative and some other argument of the verb (see section 6), the so-called “datives of interest”. Verbs in this group are (among many others) *eman* “to give”, *erosi* “to buy”, *saldu* “to sell”, *esan* “to tell”, *eskeini* “to offer”, *erakutsi* “to show”, *ekarri* “to bring”, *kontatu* “to tell”,

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esan “to say”, erantzun “to answer”. They all involve a notion of transfer from an agent or causer to a recipient or beneficiary. Verbs that cannot be interpreted as involving a transfer can have ditransitive forms, but they are invariably of the possessive sort.

The dative argument is doubly marked by Case on the noun-phrase and dative affixes on the auxiliary 16 (see Hualde, 3.6.2 for important restrictions; also Albizu, 1997):

16 In some eastern varieties, the dative agreement is optional (Lafon, 1961):

(i) Eman du haurrari
    Give Aux-T child-dat
    ‘He gave it to the child’

5.2. Bivalent ditransitive verbs

A few verbs in Basque require ditransitive auxiliaries while showing only two arguments. They are eritzi “to think, have an opinion about” (see section 7), eutsi “to retain, to hold on”, and the aspectual verbs eman “to give”, ekin “to engage in” and eragon “to keep on, hold on to”. Among the aspectual verbs the last two take noun phrase or nominalized clausal complements, the first only noun phrases with an eventive meaning:

(162) a. Lanari ekin dio
    work-dat engage-in Aux-DT
    ‘He began to work, he engaged in working’

b. Eragon beti gauza onen bati (S.)
    hold-on always thing good-g one-dat
    ‘Hold on to some good thing always’

c. Emaztea hil eta gero, negarrari eman zion
    wife-abs die and after, cry-D-dat give Aux-DT
    ‘After his wife died, he cried very often (gave himself to crying)’

None of this verbs admits any overt absolutive argument.

5.3. Alternating Verbs

A few bivalent verbs alternate between a transitive and a ditransitive auxiliary: deitu “to call”, lagundu “to help”, bultzatu “to push”, jarraitu “to follow”, begiratu “to look at”, barkatu “to pardon”, eraso “to attack”, esetsi “to attack”, itxaron “to wait”, abisatu “to notify”, erreparatu (W) “to pay attention”, utzi “to allow”. Among them we shall draw two groups: first, those verbs where both the transitive and the ditransitive form accompany an (apparently) bivalent verb. In this group we have deitu, abisatu,
Although the two forms seem to be equivalent at first glance, there are important aspectual differences that show up when we add modifiers. If we add an adlative modifier to (1a) and (b), we get different interpretations (also with *abisatu*):

(164) a. Xabier bulegora deitu dute
    Xabier-abs office-adl call-partc Aux-T
    ‘They called Xabier to the office’

b. Xabierri bulegora deitu diote
    Xabier-dat office-adl call-partc Aux-DT
    ‘They called Xabier to the office’

Whereas (164a) is ambiguous between a reading in which Xabier is in his office and they called him there, and a reading where Xabier is called from an office and ends there, (164b) has only the first reading. The structure of (164a) is rich enough to allow different scope positions for the adlative modifier. (164b) is in this regard identical to its complex predicate alternate *dei egin* “to do call”, that behaves as the ditransitive form.

Similarly with *bultzatu* “to push”:

(165) a. Autobusera bultzatu gaituzte
    bus-adl push-partc Aux-T
    ‘They pushed us into the bus’

b. Autobusean/Autobusera bultzatu digute
    bus-loc/adl push-partc Aux-DT
    ‘They pushed us in the bus’

c. ?Autobusera bultza egin digute
    bus-adl push do Aux-DT
    ‘They pushed us into the bus’

In the case of *lagundu* “to help, to accompany”, the transitive form is more accurately translated as “to help”, whereas the ditransitive form is ambiguous between accompany and help:

(166) a. Ezezagun batzuek lagundu gaituzte
    unknown some-erg help-partc Aux-T
    ‘Unknown people helped us’

b. Ezezagun batzuek lagundu digute
    unknown some-erg help/accompany-partc Aux-DT
    ‘Unknown people helped/accompanied us’
The second group comprehends those alternating verbs such that their ditransitive alternates always follow bivalent predicates, whereas their transitive forms are monovalent: in this group are *itxaron* “to wait”, *begiratu* “to look”, *eraso* “to attack”, *erregutu* “to supplicate”, *erreparatu* “to pay attention”. In their transitive form, these verbs are unergative:

(167) a. Jonek *itxaron* du  
     Jon-erg wait Aux-T  
     ‘Jon waited’

b. Jonek *itxaron* dit  
     Jon-erg wait Aux-DT  
     ‘Jon waited for me’

b. *Begiratu* dut  
     look-partc Aux-T  
     ‘I looked’

b. *Joni* begiratu diot  
     Jon-dat look-partc Aux-DT  
     ‘I looked at Jon’

6. Possessive constructions
6.1. Attributive
6.1.1. Individual level attributions
Many languages have the ability to encode possession relations not only through specific verbs or noun phrase morphology, but also directly in the argument structure of the verb. The finite morphology of the verb or the auxiliary then expresses the addition of a possessor. We can illustrate the alternance between noun phrase internal and noun phrase external possession with the following constrast in Basque:

(168) a. *Bere anaia* da  
     his brother Aux-I  
     ‘It is/He is his brother’

b. (?*Bere*) *anaia* du  
     his brother Aux-T  
     ‘He is his brother (lit. he has him brother)’

The structure of (168b) involves a predication relation between the possessed term and the term expressing the kind of possession relation: they both optionally agree in number. The auxiliary, on the other hand, agrees in person and number with both the subject possessor and the possessed:

(169) *Nik alproja horiek adiskide(ak) ditut*  
     I-erg cur those-abs friend(s) Aux-T  
     ‘Those curs are my friends’

The two alternates have slightly different interpretations though, as we can see from the glosses. Whereas (168a) admits an interpretation where the subject is not referential, (168b) doesn’t:

(170) *Nork deitzen du?*  
     N-erg call-ger Aux-T  
     ‘Who’s calling? It is their brother’

b. *Beren anaia da / ??Anaia dute*  
     their brother Aux-I/brother Aux-T  
     ‘It is their brother/??He is their brother’

Noun phrase internal possessions typically express a wider range of relations than
noun external ones. In order for the noun phrase external transitive possession to be admissible, it must be either of the inalienable kind or pertaining to something like the “personal sphere”. The personal sphere includes, besides affective notions such as friend or family (171), professional relations (172), and familiar objects (173). Part/whole relations are also accessible through this construction (174). Possessive relations that fail to express any of those relations are inadmissible in an external possession structure (175)-(176):

(171) a. Jonen anaia da  
   Jon-G brother is  
   ‘He/it is Jon’s brother’

b. (Hango hura) Jonek anaia du  
   that one-abs Jon-erg brother has  
   ‘That one is Jon’s brother’

(172) a. Kotxeak Jonen lanbidea dira  
   cars-abs Jon-G occupation Aux-I  
   ‘Cars are Jon’s occupation’

b. Jonek kotxeak lanbide ditu  
   Jon-erg cars-abs occupation Aux-T  
   ‘Cars are Jon’s occupation’

(173) a. Hori nere ohea da  
   that-abs my bed Aux-I  
   ‘That is my bed’

b. Hori ohea dut  
   that-abs bed-D aux-T  
   ‘That is my bed’

(174) a. Gela hori etxearen ganbara da  
   room that-abs house-G loft Aux-I  
   ‘That room is the loft of the house’

b. Etxeak gela hori ganbara du  
   House-erg room that-abs loft Aux-T  
   ‘That room is the loft of the house’

(175) a. (Hango hura) Eusko Jaurlaritzaren bozeramailea da  
   that one-abs Basque Government-G spokesman/woman-abs is  
   ‘That one is the spokesman/woman of the Basque Government’

b. *(Hango hura) Eusko Jaurlaritzak bozeramaile du  
   that one-abs Basque Government-erg spokesman/woman has  
   ‘That one is the spokesman/woman of the government’

(176) a. Hori nere liburua da  
   that-abs my book-D Aux-I  
   ‘That is my book’

b. *Hori liburua dut  
   that book-D aux-T  
   ‘That is my book’

Not all possessive relations expressed through a transitive structure exclude an overt possessive. In this there seems to be a difference between purely inalienable relations (177), on the one hand, and professional relations (178) and familiar objects on the other (179):

(177) a. Hori nere anaia da  
   that-abs my brother Aux-I  
   ‘That is my brother’

b. Hori (?nere) anaia dut  
   that-abs my brother Aux-T  
   ‘That is my brother (lit. I have that (as) brother)’

(178) a. Hori nere lanbidea da  
   that my job-D Aux-I  
   ‘That is my job’

b. Hori (nere) lanbidea dut  
   that (my) job-D Aux-T  
   ‘That is my job’

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Inalienable possession and other types of possession that enter into this type of construction also differ in the entailments they give rise to, despite their (apparent) formal identity:

(180) a. Jonek Aitor anaia du
    Jon-erg Aitor-abs brother Aux-T
    ‘Aitor is Jon’s brother’

b. Jonek kotxeak lanbide ditu
    Jon-erg cars-abs job Aux-T
    ‘Cars are Jon’s occupation’

Whereas from (180a) it follows that Jon must have a brother, it does not follow from (180b) that Jon must own any car.

6.1.2. Stage level attributions
Possessive relations involving a temporary or transient condition can also be expressed either through a noun-phrase internal relation or through a noun phrase external relation. The transitive, noun external, structure does not admit an overt possessor when the possession relation is of the inalienable kind (181). Otherwise it is optional (182):

(181) a. Nere eskuak ikara/bero daude
    my hands-abs trembling/hot are-in a location
    ‘My hands are trembling’

b. (*Nere) eskuak ikara/bero ditut
    I-erg my hands-abs trembling/hot Aux-T(pl)
    ‘I have my hands trembling’

(182) a. Nere ohea bero dago
    my bed-abs warm is-in a location I-erg my bed-abs warm Aux-T
    ‘My bed is warm’

b. Nik (nere) ohea bero dut
    I-erg my bed-abs warm Aux-T
    ‘I have my bed warm’

5.2. Lexical verbs
The possessive forms can also be extended to intransitive and transitive lexical verbs. Consider for instance the following alternation:

(183) a. Bere ama hil da
    his mother-abs die Aux-I
    ‘His mother died’

b. Ama hil zaio
    mother-abs die Aux-dat-abs
    ‘His mother died (on him)’

Motion verbs give rise to an interesting ambiguity when they occur in the dative-absolutive form. Consider the following cases:
The dative argument can represent either a hidden possessor or a patient (a true argument of the verb). In the first case, the verb behaves as its intransitive form, where the absolutive constituent is the only argument of the verb and marks the patient, in the case of *iritsi*, or the theme (object in motion) in the case of *joan*. In the second case, the dative only marks a possessive-like relation with the absolutive.

Verbs of inherently specified motion (such as *igo* “to climb”, *jaitsi* “to go down, to descend” or *igaro* “to cross” give rise to two sorts of transitive structures: on the one hand, transitive structures in which the object is a Theme (185a); on the other, affected transitive structures in which the object is some sort of measure (185b):

(185)  
(a)  \[ \text{Jonek patata zakuak jaitsi ditu} \]  
Jon-erg potato sacks-abs take down Aux-T  
‘Jon took down the potato sacks’

(b)  \[ \text{Jonek 50 metro jaitsi ditu urpean} \]  
Jon-erg 50 meters descend-partc Aux-T underwater  
‘Jon descended 50 meters’

Possessive ditransitive constructions can only be construed from (186a), but not from (186b):

(186)  
(a)  \[ \text{Jonek patatak jaitsi dizkit} \]  
Jon-erg potatoes-abs take down Aux-DT  
‘Jon took down my potatoes/Jon took down the potatoes on my interest’

(b)  *\[ \text{Jonek 50 metro jaitsi dizkit urpean} \]  
Jon-erg 50 meters descend-partc Aux-DT underwater  

Other modifiers may disambiguate between the two meanings. For instance, an ablative or locative postpositional phrase makes (2a) inequivocally non-possessive (but not (2b)):

(i)  \[ \text{Eskutitza Madriletik/-n iritsi zitzaion} \]  
letter-abs Madrid-abl/loc arrive-partc Aux-I-dat-abs (past)  
‘The letter got to him from/in Madrid’

Interestingly, adlative modifiers (and all those that are constructed from it) are compatible with both the possessive and the directional interpretations, in both (2a) and (2b):

(ii)  \[ \text{Eskutitza Madrilera iritsi zaio} \]  
letter-abs Madrid-adl arrive Aux-I-dat-abs  
‘The letter got to him to Madrid (to his address in madrid)’

‘His letter arrived to Madrid’

17 Other modifiers may disambiguate between the two meanings. For instance, an ablative or locative postpositional phrase makes (2a) inequivocally non-possessive (but not (2b)).
‘Jon descended 50 meters underwater on my interest’

Transitive verbs may also encode possession in the argument structure of the verb. In that case, the auxiliary becomes ditransitive. Consider for instance hautsi “to break”:

(187) a. Mikelek Jonen kotxea hautsi du
    mikel-erg Jon-g car-abs break-partc Aux-T
    ‘Mikel broke Jon’s car’

    b. Mikelek Joni (bere) kotxea hautsi dio
       Mikel-erg Jon-dat his car break-partc Aux-DT
       ‘Mikel broke his car to Jon’

If the possession relation is of the inalienable sort, the noun phrase internal possessor must disappear:

(188) a. Mikelek Jonen sudurra hautsi du
    Mikel-erg Jon-g nose-abs break Aux-T
    ‘Mikel broke Jon’s nose’

    b. Mikelek Joni (*bere) sudurra hautsi dio
       Mikel-erg Jon-dat his nose-abs break-partc Aux-DT
       ‘Mikel broke Jon his nose’

The ban on the overt presence of the possessive in inalienable constructions dissappears if the possessed element is one in a set of identical elements:

(189) a. Mikelek Jonen beso bat hautsi du
    Mikel-erg Jon-g arm one-abs break Aux-T
    ‘Mikel broke one of Jon’s arms’

    b. Mikelek Joni bere beso(etako) bat hautsi dio
       Mikel-erg Jon-dat his arm(loc-g) one break Aux-DT
       ‘Mikel broke Jon one of his arms’

There is a difference in meaning between the noun phrase internal possessive construction and the noun phrase external one in the case of inalienable possession. The noun phrase external construction implies that the dative-marked element and the absolutive-marked element enjoy material integrity (form a unit). Consider the contrast below:

(190) a. San Vicenteren besoa hautsi dute
    Saint Vincent-g arm-abs break Aux-T
    ‘They broke Saint Vincent’s arm’

    b. San Vicenteri besoa hautsi diote
       Saint Vincent-dat arm-abs break Aux-DT
       ‘They broke Saint Vincent’s arm’
Whereas in (b) it is necessary that Saint Vincent has an arm as part of his material integrity which results broken as a result of pagan or heretic violence, in (a) this is not necessary: it could be for instance the relic in the cathedral of Valencia, involuntarily broken by some unattentive tourist. Family relations also give rise to an equivalent contrast:

(191) a. Jonen ama hil da
    Jon-dat mother die Aux-dat-abs
    ‘Jon’s mother died’

Whereas to utter (191b), Jon must be directly affected (and therefore alive) when his mother dies, this is not necessary to utter (191a). (191a) can be uttered in a situation in which Jon is dead a longtime ago, and now his mother dies.

In very colloquial (and stigmatized) registers of western Basque, inalienable reflexive relations can be expressed either by noun-phrase internal possession or by reflexivizing (ditransitivizing) the auxiliary:

(192) a. Mikelek besoa hautsi du
    Mikel-erg arm-abs break Aux-T
    ‘Mikel broke his arm’

There is a difference between the two: only the former, transitive, form admits agentive modifiers (181).

(193) a. Mikelek besoa nahita hautsi du
    Mikel-erg arm-abs voluntarily break-partc Aux-T
    ‘Mikel broke his arm voluntarily’

Surprisingly enough, these intransitive forms admit plurals in a very restricted way and when so, with marginal results:

(194) a. *Adiskideak besoak hautsi dira
    friends-abs arms-abs break Aux-I
    ‘My friends broke their arms’

b. ?Adiskideak besoa hautsi dira
    friends-abs arm-abs break Aux-I(plural)
    ‘My friends broke (each) an arm’

c. *Adiskidea besoak hautsi da/dira
friend-abs arms-abs break Aux-I(sing/plural)
‘My friend broke his arms’

7. Verbs of saying, thinking and judging

7.1. Intransitive

Some factive verbs (verbs of thinking whose finite complement is understood factively) are conjugated with the intransitive auxiliary in Basque: akordatu “to remember”, jabetu “to come to realize”, ohartu “to realize”. Two others admit both a transitive and an intransitive auxiliary: gogoratu , gomutatu “to recall”. The finite complement of intransitive auxiliaries is probably not a canonical object. Two pieces of evidence can be brought up in favor of this view: (i) DP objects of those verbs are never absolutive, but postpositional (ii) Basque has a general ban on relativizing certain postpositional non argumental elements (Artiagoitia,1992), and relativizing the finite complement or a de dicto demonstrative is impossible with intransitive verbs of saying, thinking and judging. Verbs such as gogoratu “to recall”, that have both transitive and intransitive alternates are significant in this regard. In the transitive case the complement is absolutive and admits relativization, but not in the intransitive one:

(195) a. Horretaz gogoratu naiz that-instr recall-partc Aux-I
    ‘I recalled that’

    b. Hori gogoratu dut that-abs recall-partc Aux-T
    ‘I recalled that’

    ‘What I recall is that’

    b. Ggoratu dudana hori da recall-partc Aux-T-rel-D that-abs Aux-I
    ‘What I recall is that’

A verb of speech, mintzatu “to talk”, is intransitive, and conjugated with the auxiliary izan “to be”:

(197)     Horretaz mintzatu naiz
          That-about talk-partc Aux-I
    ‘I talked about that’

Finally, the verb egon “to be in a location” can be used as a verb of judgement, with the meaning of “to be in the opinion that”:

(198)     Nago ez direla garaiz etorriko
          Am-in a location neg Aux-I-Comp in time come-fut
    ‘I think (am in the opinion) that they will not be on time’

This verb cannot be negated:

(199)     *Ez nago etorriko dir-ela/-enik
neg am-in a location come-fut Aux-I-Comp
‘I don’t think that they will come’

7.2. Transitive verbs

Most of the verbs of saying, thinking and judging are transitive. Among them aditu “to hear, to understand, to perceive”, adierazi “to express, to let someone know”, adostu “to agree on something”, agertu, azaldu “to explain”, agindu “to promise, to order”, ahokatu “to advise”, aipatu “to mention”, salatu “to denounce”, sortu, zabaldu “to invent, spread the false idea that”, amestu “to dream”, asmatu “to invent”, aurreratu “to anticipate that”, iragarri “to announce”, hitzeman “to promise”, dudatu/duda egin “to doubt”, deklaratu “to declare”, aldarrikatu “to proclaim”, entzun “to hear”, erabaki “to decide”, esan “to say”, erakutsi “to show”, erantzun “to answer”, eskatu “to ask for”, galdetu “to ask”, berretsi “to confirm”, holsegin “to call (saying that)’, idatzi “to write”, leitu, irakurri “to read”, ihardetsi “to reply”, ikasi “to learn”, jakin “to know”, kontatu “to tell”, xuxurlatu “to whisper”, oihu egin “to shout (that)’, igarri “to guess, to divine”, pentsatu “to think”, sinetsi “to believe”, uste edun “to believe (have an opinion)” and ukatu “to deny”. Among the transitive verbs of saying, thinking and judging, there are some that have been adapted to such functions from apparently more basic meanings: egin “to do”, eman “to give”, jo “to hit”. The first (egin ) is used for conjectures (200), the second (eman ) to denote hypothetical events (201):

(200) a. Egingo nuke Xabier taberna horretan dagoela
    Do-fut hyp-T Xabier-abs pub that-in is-in a location-Comp
    ‘I would say that Xabier is in that pub’

     b. Egin nuen nere arterako lan hura ez zela komeni
        do Aux-T my own-for work that-abs neg was-Comp convenient
        ‘I said to myself that that work wasn’t convenient’

(201) a. Emango nuke uzta ederra izango dugula
     give-fut Aux-T-hyp good be-fut Aux-T-Comp
     ‘I would say that we will have a good harvest’

     b. ??Eman nuen ez zela etorriko
         give Aux-T neg Aux-I-Comp come-fut
         ‘I conjectured that he would not come’

Jo “to hit” is used as an equivalent of “take for” when the complement is prolative:

(202) Tontotzat jo dute
    Dumb-pro hit Aux-T
    ‘They considered him as dumb’

Raising verbs of saying, thinking and judging are morphologically transitive: iduri “to seem” and eman “to seem”:

(203) a. Iduri du Jon haserre dagoela
     seem Aux-T Jon-abs angry be-in a location-Comp
‘It seems that Jon is angry’
b. Jonek iduri du haserre dagoela
   Jon-erg seem Aux-T angry be in a location-Comp
   ‘Jon seems to be angry (lit. Jon seems that is angry)’

The embedded subject of (a) is raised in (b), and takes ergative Case. Evidence for raising is provided by the fact that no overt element can occur as the subject of the embedded clause when there is an overt subject in the matrix (but see Artiagoitia, section, this volume):

(204) *Jonek iduri du bere taldeak galdu duela
   Jon-erg seem Aux-T his team-erg lose-partc Aux-T-Comp
   ‘*Jon seems that his team lost’

Similarly for eman. When iduri/irudi takes an aspectual mark, it is automatically conjugated with the dative-absolutive auxiliary. The result is a non-raising verb that can have two different overt subjects in the matrix and the embedded clause, respectively:

(205) Joni iruditu/tzen zaio Xabier ez dela etorriko
   Jon-dat seem-partc/ger Aux-I (dat-abs) neg Aux-I-Comp come-fut
   ‘It seems to Jon that Xabier will not come ((lit.) To Jon seems that…)’

Raising of the absolutive embedded subject is not possible (with flat, non-focus intonation):

(206) *Nonbait, Xabier Joni iruditu zaio ez dela joango
   Apparently, Xabier-abs Jon-dat seem Aux-I(dat.abs) neg Aux-I-Comp go-fut
   ‘*Apparently, Xabier seems to Jon that (Xabier) will not come’

7.3. Ditransitive verbs

There are two morphologically ditransitive verbs of saying and judging in Basque. One is eritzi “to judge”, that has both synthetic and periphrastic forms and the other one, which can only be conjugated synthetically is *io “to say”. Part of the latter’s defective paradigm is formally identical to some forms of the ditransitive auxiliary. Consider for instance (207), where the bivalent forms of *io are compared to the ditransitive auxiliary:

(207) a. Ekarri diot =I something to him     b. diot =I say
    ‘bring’ diozu =you something to him     diozu=you say
    dio =He something to him     dio=he says
    diogu =We something to him     diogu=we say
    diozue=You something to him     diozue=You say
    diote =They something to him     diote=they say
To the ditransitive auxiliary following a verb like bring, corresponds a formally identical synthetic verb with a transitive meaning of “someone saying something”. There are no such forms involving anything other than third person absolutes and datives. The verb *io has also ditransitive forms, but those include a further dative marker –ts- and a person affix referring to the dative argument:

(208) a. Jonek Xabier etorriko dela dio
    Jon-erg Xabier-abs come-fut Aux-I-Comp he-says
    ‘Jon says that Xabier will come’

b. Jonek etorriko dela diosku (<dio+ts+gu)
    Jon-erg come-fut Aux-I-Comp he tells us (say+ditransitive+1¹.pl)
    ‘Jon tells us that Xabier will come’

The verb eritzi ”to judge” is also conjugated as a ditransitive verb, although it takes no overt absolutive argument:

(209) Nik horri interesgarri deritzot
    I-erg that-dat interesting judge(dat-abs-erg)
    ‘I judge that as interesting’
References

Sources of examples:


Bibliography:


De Rijk (197X)


