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# ON EMBEDDED INTERROGATIVES AND RELATED CONSTRUCTIONS IN NORTHERN BASQUE*

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## 1. Introduction

All Basque dialects have four distinct morphemes which can be affixed to the finite verb form, the choice between which depends on the internal structure of the embedded clause and its type of insertion in the matrix clause.[1] The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 introduces the four complementiser-like affixes and illustrates some of their main uses. Section 3 provides direct evidence drawn from embedded interrogatives for the necessity of postulating several layers in the left-peripheral or CP domain. Finally, in section 4, examples will be discussed which show that in some contexts, the otherwise well-established distinction between '[semi] free relatives' and embedded wh- 'semi-questions' (cf. *I don't like / know what they've done*) is apparently neutralised, although some semantic and pragmatic differences subsist.

## 2. Basic data

In the domain of complementation and subordination, there are major differences between the three large groups of dialects identified by Zuazo (1998): Western (or Biscayan) Basque, Central (or Guipuzcoan) Basque, and finally 'Eastern' Basque, a cover terms for all the remaining varieties, namely Northern or Continental Basque (henceforth *NB*), spoken in France, and some of the surviving subdialects spoken in the Spanish province of Navarra. This paper will mainly concentrate on *NB*, and the adjective 'Eastern' will only refer to its Eastern varieties.

Basque has two distinct suffixes which mark embedding. The finite verb form (FVF) of completive clauses (governed by verbs of saying and the like) always takes the suffix *-(e)la*,[2] and prenominal relative clauses (which never display any wh- item) and embedded interrogatives, henceforth EIs (as well as root and embedded exclamative sentences), *-(e)n* (I

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1 I wish to thank the audiences of the Colloquium on subordination (03/2010, Clermont-Ferrand) and of the Workshop on Clausal typing (11/2009, Paris, CNRS), as well as an anonymous reviewer, for their remarks on preliminary versions of this paper. Thanks, too, to Ricardo Etxepare, Battittu Coyos, Beñat Oyharçabal and Marie Pourquié for discussing some of the examples.

2 Peninsular Basque is more complex in such cases. In Western Basque, *-(e)la* is opposed to *-(e)na*: the latter suffix explicitly conveys a *de re* reading, whereas the former must be used if a *de dicto* meaning is intended. Moreover, when the governing verb is negativised, *-(e)nik* (where the partitive ending *-ik* replaces the singular/definite *-a*) must be used. In Central Basque, positively governed *-(e)na* is not used, but *-(e)n-ik* is, in the context just defined. See Adger & Quer (2001) and references therein for details.

will be using the words ‘interrogatives’ and ‘questions’ to refer to, respectively, syntactic and semantic ).objects

(1) Joana eri da.[3]
J. ill is
‘Joana's ill.’

(2) Peiok dio [Joana eri d**ela**]. (=da+ela)
P.E says J. ill is-*ela*
‘Peio says that Joana's ill.’

(3a) [Eri d**en**] neskatoa.
ill is-*en* girl-SG
‘The girl that's ill.’

(3b) Galdatzen dute [Joana nor d**en** / nor d**en** Joana].
asking AUX J. who is-*en*
‘They ask who Joana is.’

(3c) Galdatzen dute [(ea) eri d**en**].
asking AUX *ea* ill is-*en*
‘They ask if/whether s/he's ill.’

(3d) Zoin gaztea d**en**!
how young-SG is-*en*
'How young s/he is!’

(3d') Harritzeko da [zoin gaztea d**en**].
astonishing is how young-SG is-*en*
‘It's astonishing how young s/he is.’

There are also two prefixes (or proclitics), *ba-* and *bait-*. The former introduces conditional protases.[4] The latter appears in appositive relatives, causal adjuncts, and correlative relatives (in *NB* only: *-(e)n* is used in Peninsular Basque in such cases, which are in any case much rarer in those dialects, if used at all today).[5] The distinction between

[3] The following abbreviations will be used: [±alt], [±alternative]; AUX, auxiliary; D, dative; DEM, demonstrative; E, ergative; EI, embedded interrogative; EQ, embedded question; F, focus; FVF, finite verb form; INS, instrumental, *NB*, Northern Basque; NEG, negation; PF, perfective aspect; PL, plural; PROS, prospective aspect; PST, past tense; Q, question; REL, relative pronoun; SFR, semi-free relative, SG, singular; VC, verbal complex.

Besides, I will refer to the three historical regions of the Northern Basque Country and their respective dialects like this (from East to West): *Zub* for *Zuberoa* or *Xiberoa* (in French: *Soule, souletin*), *BN* for *Nafarroa-Behera* or *Baxenabarre* (*Basse-Navarre*, *bas-navarrais*), and *Lap* for *Lapurdi* (*Labourd, labourdin*); *NL, nafar-lapurtera* (*navarro-labourdin*) will be used for the mixed koine used by most NB authors today, and described by Lafitte (1962).

[4] In Biscayan Basque only, *ba-* has long been used along with common Basque *-(e)n* in EIs (Arejita 1978), probably under the influence of the ambiguous Spanish element ‘si’. In *NB*, there are two more uses of *ba-*. One appears in existential constructions. Conditional *ba-* is compatible with negation, but existential *ba-* is not: *norbait bada (etxean)* ‘(if) there is someone (in the house)’, but *nehor ez da* ‘there is nobody’, *nehor ez bada* ‘if there is nobody’. Finally, as in ex. (21a,b) below, the initial *ba* serves as a buffer, preventing the finite verb form from appearing sentence initially – but its use is not compulsory, as illustrated in (8b) or (14).

[5] These relatives are pure free relatives (i.e. CPs), which display a wh- item; interestingly, in this case, the wh- element is not borrowed from the same paradigm as the relatives pronouns (where *nor* ‘who’ and *zer* ‘what’ do *not* belong), but from the series of interrogative pronouns. They are called ‘correlative’ because they typically occur sentence initially, and are resumed by a pronominal correlate (which may however be a little *pro*). Here is an example:

appositive relatives and causal adjuncts is not always apparent, at least in *NB*, because the distinct wh- elements which introduce them are optional, as shown in (4):[6]

(4) Joana [Ø / zeina[7] / zeren eri **bait**-da], ez da jinen.
J. REL-SG-because ill *bait*-is NEG AUX come-PROS
'Joana, who/because (she) is ill, won't come.'

Another, more usual, type of appositive relatives consists in adjoining a "semi-free relative" (SFR) to a DP. These SFRs are built as follows. Consider first (5), in which the nominal is not repeated in the second DP—a clear case of (narrow) ellipsis:

(5) [Ttipia d-**en** neskato-a] eta [handia d-**en**-Ø-a].
small-SG is-*en* girl-SG and tall-SG is-*en*-SG
'The girl who's small and the (one) who's tall.'

There are also cases in which there is no head noun in the neighbouring context – according to the predicate, it is sometimes possible to infer whether one is referring to a human being or to a physical (or abstract) object, but it is not always the case:

(6) Erori d**-en-a**
fallen is-*en*-SG
'He who/that which has fallen'

Such sequences can be freely adjoined to a DP, as in (7), cf. (4):

(7) [Neskato hura, [erori d**-en-a**]], ez da jinen.
girl DEM fallen is-*en*-SG NEG AUX come-PROS
'That girl, who has fallen, will not come.'

It is because of the presence of the functional number/determiner *-a* that I refer to such constructions as *semi*-free relatives.

To summarize, there are two distinct constructions which, depending on the context, translate English non-root wh- clauses. (8) illustrates them when the notional domain is that of concrete or abstract "things".

(8a) [Erran duzu**-n-a**] harrigarri da. (SFR)
said you-have-*en*-SG astonishing is
'What you have said is astonishing.'

(8b) Nago [zer erran duzu-**n**]. (EQ)
I-wonder what said you-have-*en*
'I wonder what you have said.'

In section 4, we shall examine the one type of context in which SFRs and EIs vie with each other.

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(i) Nork ere huts egin **bait**-du, (hura) gaztigatua izan da.
who-E ever mistake done *bait*-AUX DEM punished-SG been AUX
'Whoever has made a mistake (that one) has been punished.'

In any case, they alternate with dislocated SFRs (see below), but never with EIs, so I'll leave them aside.

6 The explicitly causal clause can be fronted. Moreover, causal *zeren* (but not relative *zeina*) can be associated with the suffix *-en* rather than the prefix *bait-*. Finally, in *NB*, a demonstrative can sometimes replace the relative pronoun, in which case a focusing effect is often noticeable. In Peninsular Basque, the absence of any wh- element always triggers a purely causal interpretation.

7 Note the SG/D° suffix, which never turns up when *zoin* corresponds to interrogative 'which': it is not used in *Zub*, and only appeared in the other Northern dialects in the 18th century.

# 3. The structure of embedded interrogative (EIs)

## 3.1. *Preliminaries: direct questions*

Basque naturally has yes/no questions, constituent (or wh-) questions, and alternative questions.

Apart from intonation, the first subtype can be distinguished from assertions by the suffixation of *-a* (*-ia* after vowels) to the FVF – especially in many non-coastal areas of *Lap*, in *BN* and in *Zub*. This suffix is never used in the other subtypes, either in root or in embedded clauses.

(9) Ikusi duzu(**ia**)?
seen you-have-3SG-*a*
'Have you seen it/him/her?'

Wh- questions normally require that the interrogative element be left-adjacent to either the VC (verb complex: AUX. plus main verb) or to the inverted auxiliary (see §4), but exceptions are attested, especially when the restriction over the variable bound by the question operator is not referential: *zertako* 'why', *nola* 'how'. Besides, a whole series of words, such as *de(a)bru* 'devil', can follow the wh- word, yielding what Obenauer (2004) has characterized as a special type of non-canonical questions, the "Can't find the value" ones.[8] There also is a particle, *ote*, which underlines the erotetic speech act and typically procliticizes to the FVF both in yes/no Qs (in which it can be translated by 'really') and in wh- Qs – but it can also occur sentence initially and sentence finally; in some cases, it may indicate that the question is rhetorical, but it is not necessarily the case. This particle and the *-(i)a* suffix are incompatible in *NL*, but may coexist in *Zub*.

Finally, alternative questions offer a choice between (generally) two possible answers; note the possible variation in word order:

(10a) [$_F$ Liburua ala astekaria] irakurtu duzu?
book-SG or weekly read-PF you-have-3SG
'Have you read the book or the weekly?'

(10b) [$_{F1}$ Liburua] irakurtu duzu [$_{F2}$ ala astekaria]?
(*id.*)

## 3.2. *The subtypes of EIs and the structure of the CP domain*

### 3.2.1. Questions and semi-questions

The three kinds of questions described above are also present in EIs. But another distinction must be made, between what Suñer (1993) calls "[real] Indirect questions" (Krifka's (1999) "intensional questions"), and her "semi-questions" (Krifka's "extensional questions" or "question radicals"). Thus, in Basque just as in English, the semantics of the complement of *wonder* or *ask*, and of assertive positive *know* in the matrix clause are distinct, because the answer is asked for in the first case, and known in the second – compare e.g. *I wonder/do not know who came* and *I know who came*.

[8] I will leave aside here the question whether *de(a)bru* and its synonyms occupy a special functional head, as argued by Obenauer and others for many Italian dialects.

What is interesting in the case of Basque is that this distinction is optionally marked by additional material which is only to be found in real/intensional questions. (The items *ote* and *deabru* mentioned above can also be found in real EQs, but, of course, not in semi-Qs.)

First, for all speakers, yes/no EQs may be introduced by a specific item, *ea* (variants: *ia, hea, heian*), as in (3c) above. Some speakers also use *ea* in wh- EQs, but others, while judging such sentences grammatical, do not use it spontaneously.[9]

Second, in yes/no questions again, the FVF (with its suffix *-(e)n*) can receive another suffix, *-e(t)z*[10], as in (11):

(11) Galdatzen dute [ea [jinen zir(a)-en-(***etz***)]].
asking AUX *ea* come-PROS AUX-*en-etz*
'They're asking if/whether you'll come.'

The conclusion is inescapable: 'real' EQs require (at least) two functional layers (two CP layers according to McCloskey's (2006) analysis of some varieties of English), whereas 'semi-questions' are best analysed as using only one — the lower one. Following Rizzi's (1997) ground-breaking work and Krifka's theory that intensional questions provide a Speech act, optional *ea* would be the head of Rizzi's ForceP, as already advocated in Ortiz de Urbina (1999), and possibly trigger or license the presence of the second suffix, *-etz*, on the FVF followed by *-(e)n*. The wh- item(s) would of course sit in the specifier of Rizzi's Focus position. Moreover, Rizzi's prediction that there is an iterable Topic head and projection between the Force projection and the Focus projection is corroborated in Basque, whence the representation in (12):

(12) $[_{\text{ForceP}}$ [Force° *ea* $[_{\text{TopP*}}$ xx [Ø $[_{\text{FocusP}}$ α $[_{\text{Focus°}}$ (*-etz*) $[_{\text{FinP}}$…]]]]]]]

The head of TopP is null. As noted before, the phonetic realisation of *ea* is optional, and the specifier of FocusP (α) is occupied by one or several wh- items or by a disjunctive phrase, as in (14a) below, and Focus° is normally occupied by the Verb Complex (a lexical participle followed by an tensed aux., or a lexcial verb, if tensed) — but there are exceptions that do not sound as bad as the non-adjacency of wh- elements and the VC in direct questions, for

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9 It is difficult to relate *ea*, which is attested both in *NB* and in Peninsular Basque, and the suffix *-(i)a* in (9), whose dialectal distribution is very limited; besides, none of the longer variants of *ea* can be used as interrogative suffixes on the FVF.

10 According to many, *-etz* is a contraction of … *ala ez* 'or not'. However, since it is compatible with a negative EQ, as in (i) below, I remain sceptical, and prefer to link it (synchronically) to the use of *-etz* obligatorily suffixed to either *bai* 'yes' or *ez* 'no' in short embedded replies, as in (ii) (compare French *'il a répondu **que** oui / **que** non'*), *-etz* explicitly marking that the question is polar.

(i) Jin zitzaukun galdeka [ean **ez** ginen**etz** atez tronpatzen](Larzabal, 1930-64)
come AUX-PST asking *ea* NEG we-were-*etz* door-INST mistaking
'He came to us, asking if we hadn't come to/knocked at the wrong door.'

(ii) Galdatu diot [(ea) jinen den], eta ihardetsi du [bai-**etz**/ez-**etz**].
asked AUX *ea* come-PROS AUX-*en* and answered AUX yes-*etz*/no-*etz*
'I've asked him whether he'll come, and he's answered yes/no.'

Moreover, in *Zub*, *-en-ez* can be followed by *ala ez* 'or not' itself (Casenave-Harigile (2007: 236)); many examples of this type can be found in his own works, but there is already an instance in Archü's (1862) translation of the *Genesis* (18,21). Rare examples can also be found in *BN*.

reasons that remain unclear to me (even if T-to-C movement is also blocked in English or French EIs).[11]

On the other hand, "semi-Qs" do not have a Force projection, but rather start with the (optional) Topic projection(s) in (12)[12], as shown by the impossiblity of inserting *ea* and/or *-etz* in (13b), as opposed to (13a):

(13a) Galdatzen dute [***ea*** [nor [jin de-n-(***etz***)]]]. [embedded "real" question]
asking AUX *ea* who come is-*n-etz*
'They ask who has come.'

(13b) Badakit [(****ea***) nor jin de-n(****-etz***)] [embedded "semi-question"]
I-know *ea* who come is-*en-etz*
'I know who has come.'

### 3.2.2. Alternative questions

The case of alternative EQs is more complex. The suffix *-etz* is much more acceptable if the lexical alternative [A *ala* 'or' B] is discontinuous, with the sequence [*ala* B] to the right of the FVF – recall (10a,b):

(14a) Nago [ea [$_F$ sagarra ala udarea] nahi duzu-n-(#**etz**)].[13]
I wonder *ea* apple-SG or pear-SG want you-have-*n-etz*
'I wonder if you('d) like the apple or the pear.'

(14b) Nago [ea [$_{F1}$ sagarra] nahi duzu-n-(**etz**) [$_{F2}$ ala udarea]].
(*id.*)

(14a) with *-etz* is only fine on a yes/no interpretation, namely, 'I wonder whether it is the case that you want either the apple or the pear.'[14]

If the question is about the addresse's preference, an analysis that systematically associates the "A or B" alternatives with two distinct underlying clauses, as in Goenaga (2009) and uses ellipsis as a tool for deriving them will be unable to account for the contrast between (14a) and (14b), at least if the sequence to be deleted has to be exactly identical with the one that is pronounced, i.e., if *-etz* must be present in both or neither. This is because if *-etz* is present, as in (15), the first occurrence of *nahi duzunetz* in (15a) cannot be erased, but the second one can, cf. (15b), i.e. backward ellipsis is impossible. However, if *-etz* is not present, as in (16), backward ellipsis becomes possible, cf. (16a).

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11 Also note that the radical of the lexical verb must raise to Focus° in truncated wh- EIs, as in (i), where all the material under Rizzi's FinP is erased (including the inflected aux. and the aspectual ending on the lexical verb):

(i) Ez dakit [zer ihardets].
NEG I-know what √answer
'I don't know what to answer.'

12 As noted by Ortiz de Urbina (1999), some topics may precede *ea*, an unexpected fact in a Rizzian perspective. In written Northern Basque, however, I have only found examples with *one* topicalised phrase, a fact which is compatible with this element sitting in Spec,ForceP.

13 *-etz* is at best anomalous there, if not fully ungrammatical (respective judgments by Bernard Oyharçabal and Marie Pourquié, personal communication).

14 The anonymous reviewer notes that (10a) could well be a case of DP coordination, which is undeniable. But the purpose of this section is not to discuss whether there are, for instance, two possibly distinct derivations for (10a), one mono-clausal (with DP coordination) and the other bi-clausal, cf. (16a), but, to study the distribution of *-e(t)z*, and, as the discussion of (17d) below shows, the problem clearly lies elsewhere.

(15a) #Nago ea [[sagarra ~~nahi duzu n etz~~] ala [udarea nahi duzu-n-etz]].
I wonder ea apple-SG want you-have-*n-etz* or pear-SG want you-have-*n-etz*
'I wonder if you want the apple or the pear.'

(15b) Nago ea [[sagarra nahi duzu-n-etz] ala [udarea ~~nahi duzu n etz~~]].
I wonder *ea* apple-SG want you-have-*n-etz* or pear-SG want you-have-*n-etz*
(*id.*)

(16a) Nago ea [[sagarra ~~nahi duzu n~~] ala [udarea nahi duzu-n]].
I wonder ea apple-SG want you-have-*n* or pear-SG want you-have-*n-etz*
'I wonder if you want/would like the apple or the pear.'

(16b) Nago ea [[sagarra nahi duzu-n] ala [udarea ~~nahi duzu n~~]].
I wonder *e* apple-SG want you-have-*n* or pear-SG want you-have-*n-etz*
(*ditto*)

If the two sequences need not be identical, however, it might suffice to forbid backward anaphora to prevent the derivation of (15b), but it seems difficult to make such an ad hoc stipulationwithout independant evidence.

But one more factor must be taken into account. In the *NB* versions of the (secularised) parable of the prodigal son, which all date back to the very end of the 19th century (Aurrekoetxea & Videgain (eds., 2004)), the following French sentence, *Il se demanda s'il fallait qu'il le punît ou qu'il lui pardonnât*, 'He [the father] wondered whether he should punish him [his son] or forgive him' – the only EI in the text –, is rendered in different ways, among which 99 display the disjunction of two EIs (most others propose a disjunction over the lexical verbs only). The options are *a priori* as in (17), given with *BN* morphology, and Table A gives their distribution.

(17a) Galdegin zuen bere buruari behar zu***en***[15] gaztigatu ala behar zako***n*** barkhatu.
asked AUX himself-D must AUX-*en-e(t)z* punish or must AUX-*en* forgive

(17b) Galdegin zuen bere buruari behar zu***en.ez*** gaztigatu ala behar zako***n*** barkhatu.

(17c) Galdegin zuen bere buruari behar zu***en.ez*** gaztigatu ala behar zako***n.ez*** barkhatu.

(17d) #Galdegin zuen bere buruari behar zu*en* gaztigatu ala behar zako***n.ez*** barkhatu.

Table A

| | CP-*en ala* CP-*en* (17a) | CP-*ene(t)z ala* CP-*en* (17b) | CP-*ene(t)z ala* CP-*ene(t)z* (17c) | CP-*en ala* CP-*ene(t)z* (17d) | sum total by dialect |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Zub* | 1 | 21 | 3 | 0 | 25 |
| *BN* | 14 | 22 | 7 | 0 | 43 |
| *Lap* | 23 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 31 |
| sum total by type | 38 | 50 | 11 | 0 | 99 |

The most visible results are (i) that there is *not a single example* of type (17d), and (ii) that the the association of two FVFs with the double suffix *-en+e(t)z* is fairly rare. I would therefore like to suggest that an optional, but stylistically highly favoured, process of deletion of the second occurrence or *-e(t)z* was (and still is) at work.[16] It is, however, uneasy to draw a clearcut conclusion from this fact concerning a heavier ellipsis analysis of the data dealt with in (13) to (16), so the question must remain pending.

[15] The final *-(e)n* here does double duty as marking both the past tense and the specific C° required in this context (and in prenominal relatives). The ordinary completive suffix *-(e)la*, cf. (2), also absorbs the past tense suffix.

[16] Likewise, in the same corpus as well as in more recent texts, the morpheme *ote*, which emphasizes the question speech act as such, if present, mostly appears in the first clause only.

## 4. Semi-questions and Semi-free relatives

The main result from the foregoing section is that there are two distincts renderings for the English phrase *what you've done* (and French *ce que tu as fait*), depending on the context: after *I wonder*, it is a real, or extensional, Q: *zer egin duzu-n*, but, after *I don't like*, it is an SFR: *egin duzu-n-a* – recall (8a,b).

There are, however, contexts which allow both structures, but only when the EI is a semi-Q, not a real question. Thus, consider a situation in which some person A having performed something under B and C's eyes asks them not to tell anybody about it, as in (18):

(18) Mk 9, 8/9, Latin Vulgate: Præcepit illis ne cuiquam quæ vidissent, narrarent.
King James' Version: He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen.

(18a) Manatu zituen nihori ere etziozozten erran [ikhusi zituzten *gauzak*]. (Duvoisin 1865)
ordered AUX nobody-D NEG-AUX say seen AUX-*en* thing-PL
lit. 'He ordered that they not tell anybody the the things they had seen.'

(18b) Manatu zioten nehori ere ez aiphatzeko [*zer* ikusi zuten]. (Léon 1946)
ordered AUX nobody-D NEG to-mention what seen AUX-*en*
lit. 'He ordered them not to mention to anybody what they had seen.'

(18c) Debekatu zioten nehori ere aipatzea [*zer zuten* ikusi]. (Ezkila 1975)
forbidden AUX nobody-D to-mention what AUX-*en* seen
lit. 'He forbade them to mention what they had seen to anybody.'

(18d) [Ikusi zute*n-a*] nehori ez aipatzeko manatu zioten. (Etchehandy 2007)
seen AUX-*en*-SG nobody-D NEG to-mention ordered AUX
lit.: '… the-that-they-had seen.'

The plural Latin *quae* is rendered by 'what things' in the KJV, just as in (18a), which contains a prenominal relative (cf. (3a)). But there are also two embedded interrogatives, (18b,c), and an SFR, (18d). Let's first concentrate on the opposition in word order in (18b,c), since the auxiliary and the participle are inverted in the second translation. In positive assertive sentences, inversion is generally described as a strategy for marking a contrasting focus on the phrase that precedes the aux. (Lafitte (1962) among others). But if a wh- word or phrase occupies Rizzi's Spec,Focus position, what *nuance* does the inversion trigger? Duguine & Irurtzun (2008) discuss the contrast in felicity in the replies in (19):

(19a) A: Zer ikusi duzu? B: Deus/fitsik ez.
what seen you-have nothing.
'What have you seen?' 'Nothing.'

(19b) A: Zer duzu ikusi? B: #Deus/fitsik ez.
what you-have seen nothing
(as in (19a)) (*id.*)

and suggest that the (marked) order in question (19b) conveys the presupposition that the hearer has seen something. It follows that the unmarked order in (a) simply provides a conversational implicature that there exists some *x* such that the hearer has seen *x* – whence the possible cancellation in B's reply.

This approach is corroborated by the translations of many passages of the *NT*, among which the one that describes a double event: some pig-keepers, (i) having seen their herd run down a bank and drown in a lake, flee to the town, (ii) where the inhabitants come out to enquire about what has happened. Duvoisin's translation, in (20b), is revealing:

(20a) Lk 8, 34-35 LV: Quod ut viderunt factum, qui pascebant…
exierunt autem videre, quod factum est.
KJV: When they [the pig-keepers]… saw what was done…
Then they [the inhabitants] went out to see what was done.

(20b) Ikhusi zuteneko [*zer* *zen* gerthatu]…
see AUX-*en-ko* what AUX happened
jendeak ilkhi ziren [*zer* gerthatu *zen*] ikhustera.
the-people went out what happened AUX to-see
lit. 'As soon as they saw what had happened [+inversion]
the people went out to see what had happened [-inversion].'

That something had happened is presupposed in the first part, whence the (possible) inverted word order; but there is no inversion in the second part, which conveys the idea that the inhabitants were just wondering why the pig-keepers had come. Likewise, for Lk 7,22, when the Apostles are sent out to relate the miracles they have witnessed, the same translators propose respectively: an EI with inversion (Duvoisin, Léon), an SFR (Ezkila), and an unmarked EI (Etchehandy). For Mt 11,4 (which describes the same event), Duvoisin & Etchehandy have an ordinary EI, but both Léon and Ezkila, one with inverted order.

The conclusion seems to be the following: both embedded interrogatives with inverted word order and SFRs (due to the presence of the definite article) presuppose the existence of an *x*, be it, according to the context and with *zer* 'what' in EIs, a concrete or an abstract 'thing' like an event or something said. But precisely because such EIs are marked, their unmarked counterparts can perform the same task.

Finally, another contrast follows from the distinction between EIs and SFRs. Consider (21a,b):

(21a) Ba (ote) dakizu [*zer* egin duten]?
*ba* *ote* you-know [what done they- have]?
'Do you know what they have done?'

(21b) Ba (ote) dakizu [egin dute**na**]?
done they-have-*en*-SG
(*id.*)

In spite of the fact that the same translation obtains, (21a), and only (21a), can be interpreted not only as a yes/no Q, but also as a way of asking what the referents of the embedded clause's subject (*pro*, 'they') have done. This is due to the fact that the wh- item in (a) can raise at LF, the main clause ultimately functioning as a parenthetical element. That this is impossible in the (b) case is obviously due to the island effect triggered by the complex DP structure itself, which must be as in (22), i.e. where a CP functions as a complement to a D°.[17]

(22) $[_{DP}\ [_{CP}\ [_{FinP}$ egin dute] n]a]

To summarize, when a matrix verb subcategorizes for both DPs and EIs, the EIs with inverted word order share with the usual ones the status of embedded semi-questions, and with SFRs the semantic property of presupposing the existence of a non-vacuous answer, whence the optional translations illustrated in this section.

[17] Interestingly, Peninsular translations of the excerpts from the *NT* studied above and of others of the same type use SFRs much more often than EIs. It is possible that the far more restricted use of 'pure' free relatives, illustrated in footnote 5, in Peninsular Basque, should be correlated with the fact that, in contradistinction to *NB*, these varieties clearly prefer (at least today), a DP-above-CP complex structure, rather than a 'duplicated' CP, whenever it is possible. Also recall footnote 2, where it was noted that completive clauses tend to display some 'nominal' material (a D°) in the same dialects. It is difficult to directly connect these data, but they seems to indicate that subordination in Central and above all Western dialects somehow 'prefers' a nominal highest layer in the "CP" domain, an analysis provided in Adger & Quer's (2001) – or, in Rizzian terms, uses the Force head and prjection as sparsely as possible in such contexts.

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[18] The references followed by a star (*) can be freely downloaded at: http://klasikoak.armiarma.com/.