From a Basque with Bare Nouns to a Basque without

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Goals of the talk:
1. Describe the differences between the use of Basque nominals (in argument position) in both Standard Basque and the Basque dialect of Zuberoa (Souletin)
2. Show that bare nouns (BNs) in Basque are number neutral, although they are not of the argumental semantic type e
3. Provide a syntactic as well as a semantic analysis of nominal expressions in Souletin (where BNs project a DP with a null D) and in Standard Basque (where BNs are not allowed)
4. The Basque definite D is always base-generated at [Head, DP] (pace Artiagoitia 2002, 2006, to appear), hence it is a definite D in all contexts, but very flexible in its ability to type-shift [in line with the Neocartesian analysis; Chierchia 1998]
5. Standard Basque is shown to be typologically in between English and French (Etxeberria 2005, 2010)

1. Basque nominal phrases (in argument position)

1.1. The Basque definite determiner (D)

The Basque definite D is a bound morpheme.

(1) a. gizon-a man-D.sg 'the man'
b. gizon-ak man-D.pl 'the men'
(2) a. liburu urdin-a book blue-D.sg 'the blue book'
b. liburu urdin toki-a book blue small-D.sg 'the small blue book'
c. liburu urdin toki polit-a book blue small nice-D.sg 'the nice small blue book'

1.2. D in Standard Basque (and Bizkaian, Gipuzkoan, Lapurdian, Navarrese)


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject position:</th>
<th>Object position:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(3) a. Anek goxoki-a man-D.pl late come aux.pl 'A boy came late.'</td>
<td>(4) a. Anek pilote-ak man-D.pl late come aux.pl 'The man came late.'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If BNs cannot appear in argument position in Standard Basque, how does it express what other languages express by means of BNs?

> Kind reading
(5) a. Fishes appeared 390 million years ago
b. Silver has the atomic number 47

> Existential reading
(6) a. John has eaten potatoes
b. Moles are ruining our garden

1.2.1. On how D is interpreted in Standard Basque

Trask (2003: 119): "The label 'definite article' is misleading, since this article is of a much broader use than the English definite article."

> Definite/referential reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Position:</th>
<th>Object Position:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(7) a. Mutil berandu etorri zen boy-D.sg.abs late come aux.sg 'The boys came late.'</td>
<td>b. Mutil-ak berandu etorri ziren boy-D.pl.abs late come auxpl 'The boys came late.'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Subject Position:</th>
<th>Object Position:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(8) a. Anek goxoki-a jan zuen. Ane erg candy-D.sg.abs eat aux.sg 'Ane ate the candy.'</td>
<td>b. Anek goxoki-ak jan zuen. Ane erg candy-D.pl.abs eat aux.pl 'Ane ate the candies.'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 The presence of an indefinite determiner (ia) or a weak quantifier (ib) (cf. Etxeberria, 2005, 2008, in prep) also makes the sentence grammatical.

(1) a. Mutil hort berandu iritsi zen boy one late arrive aux past 'A boy arrived late'
b. Mutil asko berandu iritsi ziren boy many late arrive aux past 'Many boys arrived late'
1.3. D in Souletin

Subject Position:
(13) a. Mutil-a berandu etorrizten.  
  boy-D.sg.abs late come aux.sg 
  ‘The boy came late.’

Object Position:
(14) a. Anek goxoki-a jan zien.  
  Ane.erg candy-D.sg.abs eat aux.sg 
  ‘Ane ate the candy.’

1.3.1. Existential (narrow scope) interpretation: Dless nominals in Souletin

BNs are allowed in Souletin, but only in some very specific syntactic positions (cf. Tullabarri 1977, Coyos 1999, Casenave-Harigile 2006, Etxebarne 2006).

Object position:
(16) a. Bertiana ilu si dir behi, ardi eto mando (Coyos 1999: 232)
  mountain-D-pl see aux cow sheep and mule
  ‘I’ve seen cows, sheep, and mules in the mountain’

   b. Dombora da (…) ikan dechadan diru (Bourciez 1995)
      time is is-have aux money
      ‘It’s time for me to have money’

   c. Sara etats di (Etxebarne 2006)
      apple steal aux
      ‘She/he has stolen apples’

   d. Manexek hur edan dizui. Peio ogi jaten dizui. (Norantz)³
      Manex.erg water drink aux Peio.erg bread eat aux
      ‘Manex has drunk water. Peio eats bread’

   e. Gizon batek jan dizui gezi (Norantz)
      man one.erg eat aux cherry
      ‘A man has eaten cherries’

With narrow scope:
    Ane.erg boy want aux meet
    ‘Ane wants to meet boys. * Jon, Peru and Mikel.’

Subject position:
(18) a. Ergative:  
     * Pottiko-e giri dizui hori (Norantz)
       boy.erg do aux that
     b. Absolutive:  
       Haur jin dizui.
       child come aux
       ‘Children have come’

³ Thanks to Beatriz Oyarzabal, Iban Ezepele and Joxane Salaberria for sharing with me the data that they were collecting for the project Norantz, now available online: http://norantz.org/web/en/biliaketa
Chierchia (1998), Corbett 2.1. Properties of Basque BNs

2. BNs in Souletin (and Standard Basque)

2.1. Properties of Basque BNs


(20) Denotation of a neutral plural noun (e.g. Basque)

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(a, b, c)  = haur 'child'
(a)      = (b)      = (c)
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Evidence:

(21) Souletin & Standard Basque:

a. ikasle bat
   'one student'

b. haman ikasle
   'ten students'

c. ikasle asko
   'many students'

d. ikasle gutxi
   'few students'

(22) Souletin & Standard Basque:

a. Miren aratzain joan zeren Ameriketara.
   sheperd go aux.sg America-to
   'Miren went to America as shepherd'

b. Jon eta Miren aratzain joan zeren Ameriketara.
   sheperd go aux.pl America-to
   'Jon and Miren went to America as shepherd'

Existential sentences:

(19) a. Badüzü etidant arruán
   'There are students in the street'

b. Badüzü hur godaletin
   'There is water in the glass'

Generalizations:

(i) Souletin: BNs are allowed but only in certain restricted syntactic positions
(ii) Standard: BNs are completely ungrammatical

Things to try to understand:

i. How can we account for the use of BNs in Souletin?

ii. How can we account for the inability to use BNs in Standard Basque?

iii. Are the Souletin and the Standard Basque systems related? How?*

This property of Basque BNs resembles languages like Mandarin, Cantonese, Thai, etc.

(23) Souletin & Standard Basque:

a. auto-saltzailea
   car-seller.Dsg

b. etxe-egilea
   house-builder.Dog

(24) Souletin:

a. Miren profesor düüz
   'Miren is a teacher'

b. Peru profesor düüz
   'Peru is a teacher'

(25) Souletin:

Haur badüzü, jar zite eskerreko herrokan
   'If you have children, go to the left queue'

Souletin & Standard Basque:

a. Miren profezür düüz
   'Miren is a teacher'

b. Peru profezür düüz
   'Peru is a teacher'

c. Miren eta Peru profesor tüütü

   'Miren and Peru are teachers'

(26) wo mai le shu
   (Mandarin; Jiang (2011))

   I bought a book/books'

(27) muawang nuu khaw maa nai khrua
    (Thai; Piriyawiboon (2010))

   yesterday mouse enter come in kitchen
   'Yesterday, a mouse/mice came into the kitchen'

Basque ≠ Mandarin, Cantonese, Thai, etc.

** Kind reading:**

(28) Gou ju enhong le
    (Mandarin)

   'Dogs are extinct.'

(29) nuu klai suunpan
    (Thai)

   mouse almost extinct
   'Mouse are almost extinct'

(30) * Dinosaurus aspaldi desagertu zen
    (Souletin; Basque)

   dinosaur time ago disappear aux

** Definite reading:**

(31) you yao guo malu
    (Mandarin)

   dog want cross road
   'The dog wants to cross the road'

(32) nuu khaw maa nai baan
    (Thai)

   rat enter come in house
   'The/a rat(s) came in the house.'
Assumptions:
(i) A null element exists if it alternates –is part of a paradigm– with one or more pronounced morphemes and if each element of the paradigm contributes a distinct semantic value
(ii) DP layer must be projected with a null D (Contreras 1986, Longobardi 1994)
(iii) Null D has a default existential interpretation
(iv) Syntactically, null structure is expected to be subject to licensing conditions

3. How to account for Souletin data

Distribution of BNs in Souletin:

Direct object:
(a) Manexek hur edan dizü Peio erg osi jaten dizü.
Manex erg water drink aux Peio erg bread eat aux
‘Manex has drunk water. Peio eats bread’

Subject of unaccusatives:
(b) Haur jin dizü.
child come aux
‘Children have come’

Generalizations:
(i) BNs in Basque denote a complete semi-lattice
(ii) a. BNs in Souletin cannot function as arguments (of type e) as a general rule;
   b. BNs in Souletin only accept absolutive case and indefinite interpretation
(iii) BNs in Basque seem to be of semantic type e, i.e. a predicate denoting a set

Numerals & Classifiers:

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Evidence for D°:

Souletin possesses other means to express existential readings:

a. zumait ‘some’
Adixkide zumait khamititu dizügü
friend some invite aux
‘We have invited some friends’

b. eli bat ‘some’
Haur eli bat loi tützü lurrilat
child some fall aux floor.the.to
‘Some children have fallen to the floor’

No narrow scope:

Anek pottiko zumait/eli bat nahi dizü ezagutu. Jon, Peru, eta Mikel.
Ane erg boy some want aux meet
‘Ane wants to meet some boys. Jon, Peru and Mikel’

D is needed to express kind and definite interpretations (cf. ex. (13-14-15)).

More evidence:

(41) Existential interpretation:
Gaur goizeko festan, Peio godalet hautsi dizü. (Souletin)
today morning gen party in Peio erg glass break aux
‘In the party this morning, Peio broke glasses’

(42) Existential interpretation:
(a) #En la fiesta de ayer, Peio rompió vasos
in the party of yest. Peio broke glasses
   ‘In yesterday’s party, Peio broke glasses’
(b) En la fiesta de ayer, Peio rompió unos vasos
in the party of yest. Peio broke some glasses
   ‘In yesterday’s party, Peio broke some glasses’
4. From Souletin to Standard Basque

In Standard Basque:

(ii) D is used to express:
- definite readings
- kind reading
- existential readings with narrow scope

Question:
Why/how did Basque decide to start using the D [-a(k)] to express existential interpretations [with narrow scope]?

At least two ways can be followed here (rather speculative):

1. Null D is weakened syntactically and [-a] becomes the overt counterpart of the null (indefinite) D
   - Result: D takes a et element and returns an e element
   - Implication (& problem): [-a(k)] would be behaving as an indefinite

2. [-a] is introduced in order to mark number morphology explicitly as the plural marker [-k] is a suffix that is categorically and phonologically dependent on the presence of D [-a] (cf. Etxeberria 2005)
   - Possible motivation 1: the reason why Basque begins to mark number morphology explicitly is due to the fact that the languages around have plural markers: Spanish marks number on nouns; French uses partitive determiners (des/du).
   - Possible motivation 2: language internally, Basque goes from a situation where plural is not morphologically marked to a situation where it is necessarily marked; hence, [-a(k)] is needed

Whatever the correct analysis, [-a(k)] cannot simply be a number marker in its existential interpretation (pace Artiagoitia 2002, 2006, to appear).

Basque "definite" DP's will have two structures depending on the interpretation that they’ll be getting; if indefinite-like existential [-a/-ak] in NumP, if definite [-a/-ak] in DP.

From a Basque with BNs to a Basque without

Singular (Artiagoitia 2002: 84):
(43) a. DP  
   NumP D  
   NP △ Num  
   ardo -a ⊗ 'wine'

(42) b. DP  
   NumP D  
   NP △ Num  
   ardo (num) -a 'the wine'

Plural (Artiagoitia 2002: 84):
(44) a. DP  
   NumP D  
   NP △ Num  
   tren -ak ⊗ 'the trains'

(43) b. DP  
   NumP D  
   NP △ Num  
   tren (num) -ak 'the trains'

Problem for Artiagoitia:
(45) Maiak garagardo-a edan zuen.  
    Maia,erg beer-D.sg drink aux  
    ⇒ Specific: "Maia drank the beer" [-a] head of DP in (42b)  
    ⇒ Existential: "Maia drank beer" [-a] head of NumP in (42a)

Do we really want to claim that mass terms denote singulars? No!!

Mass terms:
(ii) singular agreement with the verb is agreement by default


4.1.1. Syntactic analysis

[-a] → definite D (always)  
[-e] → singular marker  
[-k] → plural marker
**Count terms:**

Number markers ⇒ [Head, NumP]
Definite determiner ⇒ [Head, DP]

(46)

\[ Spec \xrightarrow{\text{D}} \text{D'} \]

\[ \text{Spec} \xrightarrow{\text{NumP}} \text{D} \]

\[ \text{Spec} \xrightarrow{\text{Num'}} \text{-a} \]

\[ \text{NP} \xrightarrow{\text{mutil'boy'}} \text{-k (p)l} / -\emptyset (sg)^5 \]

**Mass terms:**

Number neutral ⇒ No NumP projection
Definite determiner ⇒ [Head, DP]

(47)

\[ \text{Spec} \xrightarrow{\text{D'}} \text{D} \]

\[ \text{NP} \xrightarrow{\text{gagardo 'beer'}} \text{-a} \]

**Nice consequences of this proposal:**

(i) By differentiating count and mass terms, this proposal avoids Artiagoitia’s problem since mass terms are unmarked for number, hence non-singular.

(ii) For Artiagoitia (2002), existentially interpreted plural [-ak] would appear in NumP, eliminating the mass interpretation of the nominal expression *gagardo 'beer'*.  

(48) *Maia* *gagardo-ak edan zituenu.*

*Maia* *berandu etorriziren. (= (7b))*

Boy-D.pl.abs late come aux.pl

‘Maia drank different types/sizes of beer.’

Problem for Artiagoitia (2002): If [-a] appeared in NumP when existentially interpreted, it should also eliminate mass interpretations, but it does not!!

(49) *Maia* *gagardo-a edan zuen.*

*Maia* *berandu etorriziren. (= (43))*

Boy-D.pl.abs late come aux.pl

‘Maia drank different types/sizes of beer.’

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Evidence for singular empty marker comes from verbal inflectional agreement in Basque.} \\
\text{Singular} & \text{Plural} \\
\text{doa} & \text{'it/she/he is going'} \quad \text{doa-z} \quad \text{'they are going'} \\
\text{dolugu} & \text{'we know it'} \quad \text{dekiz-ak-gu} \quad \text{'we know them'} \\
\text{nau} & \text{'it/she/he has me'} \quad \text{go-it-u} \quad \text{'it/she/he has us'}
\end{align*}
\]

4.1.2. Semantic analysis of the Basque definite D


\[(50) \text{Derived Kind Predication (Chierchia 1998b: 364):} \]

If P applies to objects and k denotes a kind, then

\[ P[k] \Rightarrow \exists x [k(x) \land P[x]] \]

where “” is a type shifter operator from kinds to the corresponding properties (Pred).

(51) Cats are rummaging in our garbage.

Rummaging in our garbage (cats)

\[ \Rightarrow \exists x [\neg \text{cats}(x) \land \text{rummaging in our garbage}(x)] \] (via DKP)

The NC approach, where the existential reading is dependent on the kind-level interpretation, can be applied to Basque data.

**Proposal:**

(i) Referential and Kind readings

The Basque definite D allows both the kind reading and the referential interpretation (see e.g. Kleiber 1990, Zamparelli 2002, Dobrovie-Sorin et al 2006, for Romance).

The Basque definite D takes an et element and returns an individual of type e.

\[ [-a] \text{ plays the role of the type-shifter iota when a referential reading is needed.} \]

(52) a. *Mutil-ak berandu etorriziren.*

Boy-D.pl.abs late come aux.pl

‘The boys came late.’

b. *iota (i): (e, t) \rightarrow e: \lambda P \cdot x \in [P (x)]*

\[ [-a] \text{ plays the role of the type-shifter nom when a kind reading is needed.} \]

(53) a. *Dinosauru-ak aspaldi desagertu zirenen.*

Dinosaur-D.pl.abs long time ago become extinct aux

‘Dinosaurs became extinct a long time ago.’

b. *nom (i): (e, t) \rightarrow e: \lambda P \cdot x \in [P (x)]*

(ii) Existential reading

For the existential interpretation: Derived Kind Predication (DKP).

Basque is typologically in between English and French:

(i) Some parts of the derivation of the DKP are overt while some others are kept covert

(ii) French *des (de les) / du (de le)* and Basque existentially interpreted [-a(k)] are built on a kind-denoting definite (cf. Zamparelli 2002b for Italian and French)
(54) John has read books.
Existential interpretation:
read (j, books) ⇐ ∃x [ 'book(x) ∧ read(x)] (via DKP)

(55) Jean a lu des livres.
Jean has read of the books.
Existential interpretation:
lière (j, les livresx) ⇐ ∃x [de les livres(x) ∧ lière(x)] (via DKP)

(56) Josek liburu-ak irakurri ditu.
Jean has read of the books.
Existential interpretation:
irakurri (j, liburuakx) ⇐ ∃x [liburuak(x) ∧ irakurri(x)] (via DKP)

(i) Rejected as objects of generic sentences

(57) a. * Max adores des sucreries [French]
Max adores of the sweets
b. * Cet enfant déteste du lait
this child hates the milk

(58) a. Nik goxoki-ak maite ditut. [Basque]
I love candies.
Existential interpretation
* General interpretation
b. Une honce esne-a goroto du child this erg milk-D.sg.abs hate aux
‘This child hates milk.’
Existential interpretation
* General interpretation

(ii) Perfectly acceptable as objects of stage-level predicates

(59) a. J’ai rencontré des amis ce matin. [French]
I have met of the friends this morning
b. Elle a goûté de la bière
She has drunk of the beer

Similarities between French des/du and Basque existential [-af(k)]:

(iii) Grammatical when combined with atelic (pendant ‘during/for’) adverbials

(60) a. * La femme a vu des touristes italiens.
the woman has met of the Italian tourists
b. * Un petit garçon a vu la voiture.
the small boy has seen the car.

(61) a. Marie a cueilli des fraises pendant des heures.
Marie has picked of the strawberries for of the hours
b. * Marie a cueilli des fraises en une heure.
Marie has picked of the strawberries in one hour

(62) a. Miren marrubi-ak jaso ditu ordubetez.
Miren.erg strawberry-D.pl.abs pick aux hour-for
‘Miren has picked the strawberries for an hour.’
Existential interpretation
* General interpretation
b. Miren marrubi-ak jaso ditu ordubete batean.
Miren.erg strawberry-D.pl.abs pick aux hour one-in
‘Miren has picked the strawberries in one hour.’
Existential interpretation
* General interpretation

Further evidence for the NC approach observing Basque definite DPs

Existential reading of BNs and definite DPs in Basque is derived from kind reading

(63) a. * Kepa zaurri-ak hil ditu.
Kepa.erg mole-D.sg.abs kill aux
‘Kepa has killed the moles.’
b. * Idoia zaurri-ak sustat dio.
Idoia.erg mole-D.sg.abs sustat aux
‘Idoia has eaten the chicken.’
c. * Angel zurri-zurril dago mami-ak ikusi dituelako.
Angel.erg ghost-D.pl. see aux
‘Angel is so pale because he has seen the ghosts.’
Rigid designators or definite poss. block the kind reading ⇒ no 3 reading is available.

(64) a. Kepa [nere aitaren baratzako sator-ak] bil ditu.
   Kepa [my father's vegetable garden] mole-D.pl. kill aux
   ‘Kepa has killed the moles from my father's vegetable garden.’
   √ Definite
   * Existential
   b. Idoia [bere amak erositako oñasko-a] jan du
      Idoia and [her mother market-in buy] chicken-D.sg. eat aux
      ‘Idoia has eaten the chicken her mother bought at the market.’
      √ Definite
      * Existential
      Angel pale-pale is [graveyard-in are ghost-D.pl] see aux
      ‘Angel is so pale because he has seen the ghosts that are in the graveyard.’
      √ Definite
      * Existential

The DPs in (62) cannot get the kind reading and can only be interpreted in a specific manner. Hence their ungrammaticality when combined with kind-level predicates.

(65) a. # [Nere aitaren baratzako sator-ak] ohikoak dira ingurune hauetan.
    [my father's garden from mole-D.pl] typical are region this-in
    ‘The moles from my father's vegetable garden are common in this region.’
   b. # [Amak azokan erositako oñasko-a] munduan zehar zabalduta dago.
    [her mother market-in buy] chicken-D.sg. world-in around spread is
    ‘The chicken that my mum bought in the market is widespread.’
   c. # [Kanposantuan dauden mamu-ak] aspaldi desagertu ziren
      [graveyard-in are ghost-D.pl] long time ago become extinct aux
      ‘The ghosts that are in the graveyard became extinct a long time ago.’

Generalization:
Basque definite DPs can only get an existential (indefinite-like) interpretation if it can first have a kind-level meaning.

Potential Objection:
Languages with overt type shifters block covert shift (Chierchia 1998a)

French:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly interpreted weak quantifiers</th>
<th>Partitive (existential interpretation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(66) beaucoup des étudiants</td>
<td>(67) des étudiants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>many of the students</td>
<td>'lit.: of the students'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘many of the students’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Basque:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly interpreted weak quantifiers</th>
<th>Existential interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(68) ikasle-eta-tik asko</td>
<td>(69) ikasle-ek + pred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student-D.pl.of many</td>
<td>student-D.pl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘many of the students’</td>
<td>‘students’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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