

Syntax II – Homework #6

Wh-movement in Basque

Due Thursday April 30th

[Data here from J. Ormazabal, J. Uriagereka & M. Uribe-Etxebarria (1994), *Word Order and Wh-Movement: Towards a Parametric Account*]

As you already know, Basque typically shows SOV word order in regular transitive clauses. However, when the complement of the verb is a finite clause, it may occur either to the left or to the right of the verb.

- (1) a. Mirenek [_{NP} egia] esan zidan.
Mary-erg truth-abs say aux
'Mary told me the truth.'
- b. * Mirenek esan zidan [_{NP} egia]
Mary-erg say aux truth-abs
- (2) a. Mirenek esan zidan [_{CP} Paris-era joango zela]
Mary-erg say aux [Paris-to go aux-comp]
'Mary told me that she was going to Paris.'
- b. Mirenek [_{CP} Paris-era joango zela] esan zidan
Mary-erg [Paris-to go aux-comp] say aux
'Mary told me that she was going to Paris.'

Basque allows overt wh-movement of NPs.

- (3) Zer_i esan dizute [_{t_i} irakurri dute-la]?
What_i-abs say aux [_{t_i} read aux-comp]
'What did they tell you that they read?'

Interestingly, though, wh-movement out of a clausal complement is only possible when the clause is postverbal.

- (4) a. Zer_i esan dizute [entzun dutela [_{CP} t_i irakurriko du-ela Peruk]]?
What_i-abs say aux [hear aux [_{CP} t_i read aux-comp Peru-erg]]
'What did they tell you that they heard that Peter will read?'
- b. * Zer_i esan dizute [[_{CP} t_i irakurriko du-ela Peruk] entzun dutela]?
What_i-abs say aux [[_{CP} t_i read aux-comp Peru-erg] hear aux]
'What did they tell you that they heard that Peter will read?'

Suggest an account of this restriction on wh-movement in Basque. Could these facts be unified with any island phenomena that we are already familiar with from English (either using theories we've already seen discussed, or with a modified theory)? [Useful sections in Roberts: 4.2 on Islands, 4.3.3 on Parasitic Gaps ... these are pointers to useful discussion, not passages from which you are expected to lift an account of (4).