

# Restructuring with ARI

JOSE IGNACIO HUALDE & JON ORTIZ DE URBINA  
University of Southern California / Universidad de Deusto

The purpose of this article is to provide an analysis of the verbal element *ari* in Basque. We will claim that *ari* is not an auxiliary-like element, but, rather, a verb. Furthermore, we posit the existence of a restructuring process that turns the main verb *ari* and the nominalized verb of its complement into one single complex verbal unit. This restructuring process converts a complex biclausal structure into a monoclausal one, accounting in this way for the characteristics of *ari* constructions that we will point out in the course of the following discussion.

The article is organized in the following way. In section 1, we provide some background information on 'particles' which, like *ari*, appear between main verbs and the auxiliary forms in affirmative clauses. We will show that such elements do not pattern together as a group, but actually belong to different categories: inflectional elements (*bide, omen, ote*, etc.), auxiliary forms (*ahal*) and main verbs (*nahi, behar*). We will try to establish the status of *ari* with respect to these elements. The properties of *ari* constructions are described in section 2, and, finally, in section 3 we propose an analysis of *ari* as a main verb optionally undergoing restructuring in some contexts. This analysis is shown to be more explanatory than other alternatives examined in that section.

## 1. Introduction. Verbal 'particles'

Basque is a language with rather a free word order. Almost all permutations of main constituents in a clause give grammatical results, word order expressing such pragmatic notions as topic and focus. On

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the other hand, however, only a restricted set of elements may intervene between verb and auxiliary. An NP or an adverb in that position produces ungrammatical results:

- (1) a. \*Mikelek ederki ikusi txoria du  
 Michael well see bird AUX  
 Michael has seen the bird perfectly  
 b. \*Mikelek txoria ikusi ederki du

Among the elements that may occupy the pre-auxiliary position, being in fact restricted to that position in the clause, are particles such as *ote* 'perhaps', *omen* 'apparently', *bide* 'certainly' and a few others, which qualify the assertion of the proposition expressed in the sentence, and thus fulfil the same functions as adverbs or verbal periphrases in English or verbal affixes in other languages such as Japanese. These Basque particles, however, are neither adverbs, since adverbs cannot appear in pre-auxiliary position, nor verbs, since they lack verbal morphology and in general all properties that are characteristic of verbs. Examples are given in (2):

- (2) a. zuk lan-egin ote duzu?  
 you work-perf AUX  
 Have you worked perhaps?  
 b. elefante-ei bananak gustatzen omen zaizkie  
 elephant-dat bananas like-imp AUX  
 It is said that elephants like bananas  
 c. gure helburuak iritsiko bide ditugu  
 our goals reach-fut AUX  
 We will certainly reach our goals

The distribution of these elements is only limited semantically, but it is not subject to any syntactic restrictions of co-occurrence.

Also in pre-auxiliary position, we find *bait* 'since', (*baldin*) *ba* 'if', *al* yes-no question marker, and *ez* negative marker, which must precede these other particles if it co-occurs with them and causes auxiliary-preposing in main clauses. Examples containing particles of this second group are given in (3):

- (3) a. ikusi bait dut  
 see-perf AUX  
 Since I have seen  
 b. ikusten baldin baduzu  
 see-imp AUX  
 If you see it  
 c. elefanteak ikusi al dituzu?  
 elephants see-imp AUX  
 Have you seen the elephants?  
 d. elefantea ez baldin baduzu ikusten...  
 elephant no AUX see-imp  
 If you don't see the elephant...

Finally, we also find between main verb and auxiliary certain elements which one would a priori identify as defective verbs, such as *nahi* 'want', *behar* 'need, must', *ahal* 'can', *ezin* 'cannot', *ohi* 'be wont to', and *ari* 'be engaged in'. These elements lack verbal morphology, to a certain degree. They all lack a perfective form. They do have, on the other hand, a future form, at least dialectally (with the exception of *ohi*) in addition to their perfective/radical form.

Unlike those elements in (2) and (3), the ones that we are considering now impose restrictions on the verbal forms with which they can co-occur. *Nahi* 'want', *behar* 'must', *ohi* 'be wont to' and *ezin* 'cannot' do not appear with imperfective forms (in *-t(z)en*)<sup>1</sup>. *Ahal* 'can' requires the imperfective form in Northern dialects, but perfective forms in other dialects. *Ari* 'to be engaged in' appears with imperfective forms only. In addition, *nahi*, *behar*, and *ari* impose restrictions on the forms of the auxiliary. These elements, and not the verb with which they co-occur, determine the choice of auxiliary<sup>2</sup>. *Nahi* and *behar* select transitive auxiliaries, which will be used regardless of the transitivity or intransitivity of the accompanying verbs. *Ari* requires intransitive auxiliary forms, with all verbs. *Nahi*, *behar* and *ari*, but not *ahal*, *ezin* or *ohi*, can also be used as main verbs, without any other accompanying verb. These properties (i.e., selection of accompanying verb forms, selection of auxiliaries, and ability to appear as only verb) are summarized in (4) for all the elements in this group. One could advance that the more of these properties an element has, the more it will be like a verb:

(4)

TABLE 1

	ohi	ahal	ezin	behar	nahi	ari
selected verb form	perf	imp	imp	perf	perf	imp
selected auxiliary	—	—	—	trans	trans	intr
main verb	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes

(Table 1 reflects the situation in the standard dialect).

In (5), examples are provided illustrating the facts in Table 1. For each element two examples are given, one with the intransitive verb *hurbildu* 'to approach' and the other with the transitive verb *jan* 'to eat':

(1) In Classical Literary Labourdin, which, with the incorporation of many Low Navarrese traits, forms the basis of Lafitte's grammar, *ohi* is used with imperfective and not perfective forms; but this use has been discarded in today's standard language. Alvarez Enparantza (1978) expressly condemns the use of *ohi* with imperfective forms in his grammar of standard Basque.

(2) For *nahi* and *behar* this is true in the standard language and in central dialects. In Bizkaian the choice of auxiliaries in constructions with *behar* depends often on the valency of the (main) verb, although this usage might have been due to purist influences (J. Lakarra). In northern dialects both *behar* and *nahi* may optionally appear with transitive auxiliaries or with auxiliaries reflecting the embedded verb valency (see Lafitte 1979: 348). Thus, the following contrast obtains:

(i) joan behar dut (standard)  
 (ii) joan behar naiz (Bizkaian, northern)

As mentioned above, though, forms like *joan biot* (*behar dot*) are common in Bizkaian.

- (5) a. *hurbildu* /\**hurbiltzen* ohi naiz  
           -perf           -imp       AUX-intr  
       I usually get close
- a'. *jan* / \**jaten* ohi dut  
       -perf       -imp       AUX-trans  
       I usually eat
- b. *hurbildu*/\**hurbiltzen* ahal naiz  
       I can get close
- b'. *jan*/\**jaten* ahal dut  
       I can eat
- c. *hurbildu*/\**hurbiltzen* behar \*naiz/dut  
       I must get close
- c'. *jan*/\**jaten* behar dut  
       I must eat
- d. \**hurbildu*/*hurbiltzen* ari naiz/\*dut  
       I am getting close
- d'. \**jan*/*jaten* ari naiz  
       I am eating

In this paper, the nature of *ari* will be analyzed. Three hypotheses will be considered in turn. A first hypothesis that we shall entertain is that *ari* is a detransitivizer (since it selects intransitive auxiliaries even when used in conjunction with transitive verbs). Arguments against this hypothesis will be given. Then, we shall consider together the hypothesis that *ari* is an auxiliary (a modal) and the hypothesis that it is a verb. We will offer concluding evidence for the position that *ari* is a main verb in every case. We will argue that *ari* is indeed very different from elements such as *ahal* 'can'. Whereas *ahal* is a modal element that intervenes between a verb and an auxiliary, *ari*, we will argue, is a main verb with its own auxiliary which may take a nominalized clause as its complement. Arguments will be given for a restructuring rule in these constructions with *ari*, the result of which is to convert a biclausal construction into a monoclausal construction, at two different levels of representation.

In section 2, the data to be analyzed are systematically described. We will present in turn the use of *ari* in constructions with other verbs and its use as single verbal element. In section 3, our analysis will be presented.

## 2. The data

### 2.1. *Verb + ari + Aux constructions*

*Ari* may appear between a verbal form and an auxiliary. In these instances, the verbal form will have a *-t(z)en* ending, which is ambiguous between being an imperfective aspect marker and being a nominalized verbal form in the inesive case, a *-t(z)era(t)* ending, which signals a nominalized verbal form in the allative case, or a *-t(z)eari*

ending, which is the mark of a nominalized verb in the dative case. The meaning of the construction is slightly different in each case. Examples are given in (6) (from Lafitte (1979)):

- (6) a. *irauten ari nuzu*  
I am sewing  
b. *sendatzerat ari da*  
(S)he is close to getting cured  
c. *sendatzeari ari da*  
(S)he is making an effort to get cured

In this section we will show how the argument configuration of different verb types is encoded in constructions with *ari*. Since only constructions of the type illustrated in (a) are widely used in the standard language, we will limit our scope to these<sup>3</sup>.

We may classify Basque verbs according to the number of argument NP's that they must minimally take in the clause, in simple, unmarked constructions (overtly or covertly) and the morphological case of these NP's. In (7) we offer such a classification with an example of each type. We use A as abbreviation for 'absolutive', E for 'ergative' and D for 'dative':

- (7) a. NP(A); e.g.: *mintzatu* 'to talk'  
b. NP(E); e.g.: *kurritu* 'to run'  
c. NP(E), NP(A); e.g.: *eraiki* 'to build'  
d. NP(A), NP(D); e.g.: *gustatu* 'to please'  
e. NP(E) NP(D); e.g.: *begiratu* 'to look at'  
f. NP(E), NP(D), NP(A); e.g.: *eman* 'to give'

Some verbs have different argument configurations in different dialects. Thus, *irten/urten* 'to leave (intr)' is type (a) in most dialects,

(3) ARI is not present in Bizkaian Basque, where forms of the verb *ihardun* are sometimes used with similar meaning and distribution. Other ways of expressing the action one is engaged in make use of different verbs, such as *ibili* 'to walk' and *egon* 'to be':

- (i) a. *igeri-an dabil*  
swimming-in walks  
He is swimming  
b. *igeri egi-te-n dabil*  
swimming do-nom-in  
He is swimming  
(ii) a. *lan-ean dago*  
work-in  
He is working/at work  
b. *lan egi-te-n dago*  
do-nom-in  
He is working

It is interesting to notice that in Lafitte's dialect, *egon* is used in this context with the same range of governed cases in the complement as *ari* (Lafitte 1979: 351), with slightly different semantic connotations:

- (iii) *bero-tze-n dago*  
heat-nom-in is  
'Je me chauffe' ('Présent continu')  
(iv) *jaus-te-ari dago*  
descend-nom-dat  
'Il songe à descendre' ('Futur d'intention')  
(v) *jaus-te-ra dago*  
-nom-allative  
'Il est décidé à descendre' ('Futur arrêté')

but type (b) in Bizkaian and part of Gipuzkoan (cfr. *irten naiz/urten dot*). Synchronically, the verb *jarraitu/jarraiki* 'to follow' can be of type (c), (d) or (e) in different dialects (e.g. *jarraiki dut/diot/natzaio* 'I followed him')<sup>4</sup>.

The auxiliary encodes in every instance the person, number and case features of ergative, absolutive and dative NP arguments of the verb. There are not any forms of the auxiliary without absolutive markers. Thus, with verbs of types (b) and (e), which do not take an absolutive argument, the auxiliary contains a default third person singular absolutive marker. The subject of the sentence, or external argument of the verb, is the ergative NP if there is one. Otherwise, the absolutive NP.

In constructions with *ari*, the following change in case marking takes place: the argument which would appear as ergative in a mono-verbal clause receives instead absolutive case marking. The case marking of the subject of the clause with a verb of types (b), (c), (e) and (f) is therefore changed to absolutive. A result is that with verb types (c), (e) and (f) there will be two argument NP's marked for absolutive case. These two absolutive arguments now compete for the only absolutive 'slot' in the auxiliary. The one that is encoded in every case is the external argument of the verb; that is, the one that would appear as ergative in a basic clause. With verbs of types (a) and (d) there will be no changes either in the case marking of the arguments or in the form of the auxiliary in constructions with *ari*, since these verbs lack an ergative argument. Constructions with and without *ari* are exemplified for each of the verb types which we have identified in (7) in order to illustrate the changes in case marking and auxiliary form.

- (8) (a) Jon mintzaten da  
 John-A talk 3A  
 John talks
- (a') Jon mintzaten ari da  
 John-A 3A  
 John is talking
- (b) berriek kurritzen dute  
 news-pE run 3sA-3pE  
 The news runs

(4) The verb *jarraiki* can also be used with the meaning of 'to continue' (cfr. Spanish *seguir* 'to follow/to continue'). In this case, its auxiliary is marked either only for absolutive or absolutive/ergative. The examples are from Salaburu and Kintana (1984:99), who condemn this use of *jarraiki* as a calque from Spanish:

- (i) burrukatzten jarraituko dugu  
 AUX-trans (A/E)  
 We will keep on fighting
- (ii) ikasten jarraitzen dira  
 AUX-intr (A)  
 They are still studying

- (b) berriak kurritzen ari dira  
 news-pA 3pA  
 The news is running
- (c) guk etxeak eraikitzen ditugu  
 we-E house-pA build 3pA-1pE  
 We build houses
- (c') gu etxeak eraikitzen ari gara  
 we-A house-pA 1pA  
 We are building houses
- (d) niri elefanteak gustatzen zaizkit  
 I-D elephant-pA like 3pA-1sD  
 I like elephants
- (d') niri elefanteak gustatzen ari zaizkit gero eta gehiago  
 I-D -pA 3pA-1sD  
 I am liking elephants more and more
- (e) nik begiratzen dizut  
 I-E look 3sA-2sD-1sE  
 I look at you
- (e') ni begiratzen ari natzaizu  
 I-A 1sA-2sD  
 I am looking at you
- (f) nik liburua ematen dizut  
 I-E book-A give 3sA-2sD-1sE  
 I give you the book
- (f') ni liburua ematen ari natzaizu  
 I-A book-A 1sA-2sD  
 I am giving you the book

An important aspect of *ari* constructions, then, is the existence in clause types (c') and (f') above of two absolutive arguments, only one of which is encoded in the inflection. The analysis to be developed in section 3 will also try to account for this apparently bizarre feature of *ari* constructions.

## 2.2. *Ari as only verb*

*Ari* can be used either in the company of another verb, as we have just seen, or by itself as only verb in the clause. In this second case, when *ari* is employed as a main and only verb, it generally takes minimally two arguments; one, the external argument, that is, the subject of the sentence, must appear in the absolutive case. The other argument can take a number of different morphological cases. The internal argument usually takes the inessive case, as in (9), and, less frequently, the instrumental case, as in (10):

- (9) Mikel lanean ari da  
 -A work-ine AUX  
 Mikel is busy at work/ is working

- (10) Mikel oihuz ari da  
 -A scream-ins AUX  
 Mikel is screaming

Although *inesive* and, to a small extent, *instrumental*, are the most common case markings associated with *ari* nominal complements, the latter may also occasionally appear in dative case (11) or in the absolutive case (12). Arguments with these cases are normally marked in the inflection; however, with *ari* the only argument that is encoded in the auxiliary is the subject, and neither dative nor absolutive internal arguments are marked, as shown in the following examples (from Lafitte 1979:442):

- (11) lanari ari zen suharki  
 work-D AUX ardently  
 He applied himself to the work ardently
- (12) hura ere zerbait ari da  
 he-A too something-A AUX  
 He is also busy at something

The fact that an absolutive internal argument like the one in (12) is not encoded in the auxiliary when the external argument is also absolutive could be attributed to purely morphological constraints, i.e., the auxiliary can carry only one affix for each case. Then, if more than one argument NP is marked absolutive, agreement with the subject prevails over agreement with an object. The fact that in (11) a dative argument is not marked in the auxiliary is, however, not amenable to a simple explanation. This contrasts with dative arguments in verb+*ari*+aux constructions like those in (7d') (7e') and (7f'), which do appear marked in the auxiliary.

In some Eastern dialects, such as the Baztan variety described in Salaburu (1984), the marking of dative arguments in the auxiliary is either optional or disallowed when this argument is lexically realized in the sentence. The dialect that Lafitte describes, however, does not seem to be of this type, since in examples with other verbs, lexically present dative arguments are encoded in the auxiliary:

- (13) amari eman dio  
 mother-D give AUX: 3sA-3sD-3sE  
 (S)he has given it to the mother
- (14) ez zaitzue zueri ethorriko  
 no AUX: 3sA-2pD you-pD come-fut  
 (S)he will not come to you

Sentence (13) has a transitive auxiliary and (14) an intransitive auxiliary. Both sentences show a dative argument which is encoded in the auxiliary. This is what would be expected in sentences with any verb. However, we have seen that this is not the case in sentences



containing *ari* as main and only verb. The explanation for this peculiar behavior of *ari* lies, we believe, in the thematic role which the argument marked for morphological dative case is assigned. Noun phrases with dative case marking usually have a goal or benefactive thematic role. The dative argument in a sentence like (11) has, however, a very different thematic interpretation. The fact that the dative argument of *ari* in (11) is neither a goal nor a benefactive is what allows its free alternation with other cases such as the inesive case. We would suggest that the dative argument of *ari*, which as we have just pointed out does not have the same thematic role as typical dative noun phrases, is not a direct argument of the verb. This explains its not being encoded in the auxiliary<sup>5</sup>. This could also apply to the absolutive non-subject noun phrases in sentences such as (12), although we have noted that in these cases agreement is morphologically impossible, the only absolutive slot being occupied by the subject argument marker.

It is possible for *ari* to appear with only one argument NP, its subject. This is the case when *ari* is employed with an adverbial in *ka*, which specifies the type of activity, as in (15):

- (15) gizonak pilotaka ari dira  
 men-pA ball-adv 3pA  
 The men are playing ball

Dialectally and in older Basque, *ari* can be used without any NP or adverb specifying the activity. Lafon (1943:143) reports that in Souletin

(5) Later on we will claim that dative arguments of sentential complements embedded under *ari* may not be marked in the latter's auxiliary because the restructuring process allowing such apparent 'cross-sentential' marking is optional. However, the situation in the examples under discussion is different, since the dative belongs to the clause of which *ari* is the main verb: there is no embedded sentential complement in (1). Dative NP's with atypical thematic roles also remain unencoded in the auxiliary with other verbs, not only with *ari*, in the dialect that Lafitte describes. The following examples are also from Lafitte (1979:422):

- (i) hasi zen bere sailari  
 begin AUX-(A) his task-D  
 He applied himself to his task (lit.: he started to his task)
- (ii) ez da deusi ohartu  
 no AUX-(A) anything-D notice  
 He did not notice anything

Other verbs with atypical, unencoded datives in such north-eastern dialects are *begiratu* 'to look at', *jarraiki* 'to continue', *lotu* 'to stick to', *saiatu* 'to try, to concentrate on' etc. Although these verbs, along with some idiosyncratic uses of the dative marker like the ones in (iii, iv) account for the majority of unencoded datives, there are still some cases which demand some general explanation, like the ones in (v, vi) (examples from J. P. Duvoisin's *Laborantzako Liburua*):

- (iii) Neguan goseak etxe-ei hurbil-arazten du  
 winter hunger house-D approach-make aux  
 Hunger makes them get close to the houses in wintertime
- (iv) Arbolak lehenago zagoen alde ber-ari landatu behar du  
 tree before was side same-D plant need aux  
 The tree has to be planted (oriented) to the some side it was before
- (v) Zer bidegabe egiten duten beren buru-ei  
 what harm do aux their head-D  
 Which harm they do to themselves
- (vi) Ardiek lurr-ari on handia dakharkete  
 sheep soil-D good great bring  
 Sheep bring great benefit to the soil

In none of the preceding examples does the auxiliary or main verb include the dative marker which would be required in Standard Basque.

'to be busy, to work' can be expressed as *ari nüzü* with or without *lanian* 'in work', and also provides the two following examples from the sixteenth century author Dechepare:

- (16) Iangoycua ariduçu hala gurequi  
 god-A ari-AUX that way with us  
 God has acted towards us in that manner
- (17) Eci hala ariçu Ihesu Christo vera ere  
 since that way ari-AUX Jesus Christ self too  
 Because Jesus Christ himself has also acted in that way

*Ari*, thus, was originally an intransitive verb with the general meaning of 'being active, acting'. As such, its only argument is the actor. The type of activity could or could not be specified by means of a complement. Nowadays, in most dialects, the type of activity must necessarily be specified and this is done by means of an NP usually in the inesive but occasionally in a number of different morphological cases, by means of an adverbial, as we have seen above, or by means of a sentential complement. The valency of *ari* has remained constant: it is a monovalent intransitive verb.

### 3. The analysis

In this section, constructions with *ari* will be studied aiming at determining the nature and function of this element. The issue arises specially in connection with verb+*ari*+auxiliary constructions, where *ari* may be analyzed in radically different ways. Its status as main verb when it is the only verbal element of the clause, as in the constructions examined in 2.2. is quite uncontroversial. We will claim that *ari* is indeed a main verb in all contexts, but one subject to a reanalysis process with the verb in what we have described as verb+*ari*+auxiliary constructions.

#### 3.1. The detransitivization hypothesis

We could start by comparing a regular present tense transitive sentence like the one in (18a) with (18b), where *ari* intervenes between main verb and auxiliary:

- (18) a. Mikel-ek eskutitz-ak idazten ditu  
 -E letter-pA write AUX:3pA-3sE  
 Mikel writes letters
- b. Mikel eskutitza-k idazten ari da  
 -A -pA AUX:3sA  
 Mikel is writing letters

If we compare (18a) and (18b), we notice several obvious differences. In (18a) we find that a) the subject is in the ergative case, and b) the auxiliary marks agreement with both subject and object. By contrast,

sentence (18b), where *ari* has been used, shows the following characteristics: a) the subject is in the absolutive (unmarked) case, and b) the auxiliary is monovalent, showing agreement only with the subject.

If we restricted our data to sentences of the types illustrated in (18), we would be led to conclude that the degree of transitivity of *ari* constructions is lower than that of corresponding simpler sentences with the same main verb and arguments (following the approach in Hopper and Thompson 1980). In the sentence with *ari*, the subject is in the case that subjects of intransitive sentences take and the object is not encoded in the auxiliary; which could be taken as an indication that it is no longer to be considered a direct argument of the verb. In a sentence such as (18b), one would conclude, the emphasis is on the activity of the subject and not on how this activity affects the object. *Ari* constructions could be viewed as antipassive constructions, similar to those found in many ergative languages, whose cross-linguistic characteristics are precisely that the subject of an otherwise transitive verb appears in the case that intransitive subjects take and the object is demoted. The result of the application of antipassivization is an intransitive sentence. *Ari* in this analysis would be an intransitivizer, whose function would be to allow an intransitive use of transitive verbs. Such analysis of *ari* has in fact been proposed in Postal (1977).

However, this analysis, which seems perfectly coherent if we restrict ourselves to examples such as those in (18) above, cannot possibly be maintained once we expand the range of data to be considered.

There are two compelling reasons why *ari* cannot be considered as intransitivizer. Firstly, its use is not restricted to sentences containing otherwise transitive verbs, but it is also used with intransitive verbs. Secondly, *ari* may also function as a main and only verb in its clause, in which case it does not make sense to say that it is modifying the valency of another verb.

Let us consider the examples in (19):

- (19) a. Mikel hurbiltzen da  
           -A approach AUX  
           Mikel gets close  
       b. Mikel hubiltzen ari da  
           Mikel is getting close

The relation between (19a) and (19b) is identical to that between (18a) and (18b). In each case, the (a) sentence contains a simple present, which is interpreted as habitual, and the (b) sentence is an *ari* construction. One could not maintain that (19b) is any way more intransitive than (19a), as one could have claimed with respect to the sentences in (18). Both sentences in (19) are purely intransitive. The difference in meaning between (19a) and (19b) is that the (b) sentence

expresses an action in progress, whereas (19a) has a habitual reading, as indicated before. And this difference is also found between (18a) and (18b).

As mentioned, *ari* can also function as a main verb. This is illustrated again in (20):

- (20) Mikel borrokan ari da  
       -A fight-ine       AUX  
       Mikel is fighting/is engaged in the struggle

As a main verb, *ari* conveys the meaning 'being engaged in' or 'being involved in', and takes an argument normally in the inesive case, but also in some other cases, as discussed above. Clearly, *ari* is not acting as a detransitivizer in (20), since there is no other predicate in the clause.

We must conclude from the examples presented that *ari* cannot be viewed as an intrasitivizer. Rather, the difference in meaning between the (a) and (b) sentences in (18) and (19) would indicate that *ari* is an aspectual marker, roughly, a progressive auxiliary marker. In the following section this hypothesis will be discussed: we will contrast the hypothesis that *ari* is a modal auxiliary element, at least when used together with a main verb, with the hypothesis that *ari* is always a verb and that (18-19b) are constructions containing two verbs and an auxiliary. The latter analysis will be shown to be adequate.

### 3.2. *Ari as a modal element versus ari as a main verb*

The two hypotheses (modal or main verbal nature of *ari*) are plausible due to a homophony existing in Basque morphology. Most Basque verbs are conjugated periphrastically: the auxiliary includes tense, person and mood information, and the main verb may appear marked with aspectual markers. There are three aspectual markers: perfective (*-i*, *-tu*, *-n*, etc.), future (*-ko*, added to the perfective suffix) and imperfective (*-(t(z)en)*). Thus, *idazten* in (21a) is an imperfective form of the verb conjugated with an auxiliary. Some of the pre-auxiliary particles and modals briefly discussed in section 1 may appear between the imperfective form and the auxiliary, as in (21b), with the quotative particle *omen*, and in (21c) with the potential modal *ahal*:

- (21) a. Mikel-ek eskutitzak idaz-ten   ditu  
       -E letter-A   write-imp AUX  
       Mikel writes letters  
       b. Mikel-ek eskutitzak idaz-ten omen ditu  
       It is said that Mikel writes letters  
       c. Mikel-ek eskutitzak idaz-ten ahal ditu (Northern dialects)  
       Mikel can write letters



Since in verb+*ari*+auxiliary constructions, the case ending of the verb coincides with the case ending of noun complements of the main verb *ari*, we can conclude that the *-t(z)en* ending usually associated with the verb appearing along with *ari* is to be identified as an inessive nominalization, rather than as the homophonous imperfective ending. Therefore, we will try to show that not only is *-t(z)en* in (22) quite a different ending from the one appearing in the sentences in (21), but also *ari* is different syntactically from pre-auxiliary particles like *omen* and *ahal*.

In order to check whether *ari* behaves as a modal-like element or as a main verb, we can compare its syntactic distribution with other modal auxiliaries like potential *ahal* 'can'. Potentiality can be expressed in Basque by means of the potential infix *-ke* attached to subjunctive auxiliaries (27a), or by means of the modal particle *ahal* (27b):

- (27) a. joan n-a-ite-ke  
           go 1A-prs-aux(subj)-pot  
           I can go  
       b. joan ahal n-a-iz  
           go 1A-prs-aux  
           I can go

Occasionally, both the infix and the modal particle can co-occur:

- (28) Joan ahal naiteke  
       I can go

We will analyze *ahal* as appearing as a right sister to the main verbal head, with a structure as in (29):

- (29)
- ```

      V
     / \
    joan ahal
  
```

This constituency explains the linear distribution of this modal element with respect to other pre-auxiliary particles mentioned above, like negative *ez*, conditional (*baldin*) *ba*, quotative *omen*, etc., which are cliticized to the auxiliary and which we will analyze as being attached to the inflection. First, since the inflection (auxiliary and particles) follows the main verb in declarative affirmative sentences, 'inflectional particles' like conditional *ba* will always follow modals, which are generated under the main verb node V, as seen in (30):

- (30) etxeak erosi ahal badituzte  
       houses buy if AUX  
       If they can buy the houses...

Second, in negative sentences, where the negative particle *ez* cliticized to the inflection is preposed along with it, modals like *ahal* should

be left behind to the right of the verb, rather than moved along with inflection. This is indeed the case, as shown in (31):

- (31) ez badituzte etxeak erosi ahal  
 neg  
 If they can't buy the houses...

If modals are generated within the V node, it is predicted that aspectual elements which are attached to the right of the verb, will follow the main verb if *ahal* is not present but will be able to follow the modal when the latter is present. This is the case, as shown in (32), where future *-ko* or perfective *izan* are directly attached to the right of *ahal*:

- (32) a. etxeak erosi ahal-ko badituzte  
 -fut  
 If they will be able to buy the houses...  
 b. etxeak erosi ahal izan badituzte  
 perf  
 If they have been able to buy the houses...

Finally, a key feature of modals like *ahal* is that they do not subcategorize for any particular auxiliary, but, rather, the latter is determined by the transitivity of the main verb. Thus, in (27b) the auxiliary is intransitive *izan*, since *joan* 'to go' is intransitive, while in (30) it is transitive *ukan* due to the presence of the transitive verb *erosi* 'to buy'.

Returning now to *ari*, its distribution can be shown to differ from that of modals like *ahal*. In the first place, *ahal*, the same as the English modal auxiliary 'can', must occur modifying a verb, and cannot appear by itself (unlike, for instance, Spanish *poder*, cfr. 'lo puede todo'. See Lafitte (1979: 656)). On the other hand, *ari* can appear as an independent verb, as in the sentences described in 2.2. More over, *ari* can be nominalized (*aritzea*), while auxiliaries cannot be directly so: \**nahitzea* (*nahi izatea*), \**ahaltzea* (*ahal izatea*). This situation is similar to the one found in English, where the auxiliary *can* cannot be nominalized: \**to can*.

Secondly, *ahal* has a more restricted distribution than *ari* in interrogative clauses: wh-words in Basque must appear in a position immediately preceding the verb. In sentences with *ahal* and *ari*, the wh-word can appear immediately preceding the 'main' verb and also immediately preceding *ari*, but not preceding *ahal*:

- (33) a. nork irakurri ahal du?  
 who read AUX  
 Who can read?  
 b. ??nork ahal du irakurri?

- (34) a. nor ari da liburua irakurtzen?  
           who    AUX  
           Who is reading the book?  
       b. nor irakurtzen ari da liburua?

An explanation of these data with respect to *ari* will be provided below. The point here is that this can be explained if *ari* is a verb, which, like other verbs, 'defines' a focus position to its left. On the other hand, *ahal* in (33) is a modal auxiliary modifying a verb and cannot 'define' a focus position by itself.

Finally, while *ahal* does not impose any auxiliary selection, as discussed above, *ari* does: it can appear only with the intransitive auxiliary *izan* regardless of the transitivity or intransitivity of the verb marked *-t(z)en*. As discussed in 2.1, *ari* seems to decrease the valency of the transitive verbs it appears with. This can be explained again if *ari* is an independent (intransitive) verb selecting *izan* auxiliary and occurring with a tenseless embedded nominalized clause case marked *inesive* (and, occasionally, *dative* or *allative*).

A final piece of evidence can be brought forth in support of the status of *ari* as a main verb subcategorizing for *inesive* nominalized clauses. The verbal base receiving the nominalizing affix *-t(z)e* shares both nominal and verbal properties. As a noun, it can be inflected for different cases, as discussed above. As a verb, it maintains its ability to case and  $\theta$ -mark its complements, and, indirectly, the subject. In southern dialects, the case marking pattern in nominalized clauses is identical to the pattern found in tensed clauses. Thus, in (35), the expected distribution of ergative, absolutive and dative surfaces in the embedded nominalized clause, which is marked itself absolutive as corresponds to its intransitive subject function:

- (35) [lagun-ek ni-ri eskutitz-ak idaz-te]-a gustatzen zait  
       friend-E I-D letter-A write-nom-A like AUX  
       I like my friends' writing letters to me

In particular, the object of *idazte* is marked absolutive, the same as first objects of tensed verbs. This contrasts with noun objects, which are marked by the genitive case, as shown in (36):

- (36) herri-en zapalketa  
       people-gen oppression  
       The oppression of countries

However, in northern dialects (and, as pointed out by J. Lakarra (p. c.) in archaic forms of southern dialects), nominalized verbs show further evidence of their shared nominal/verbal nature. While subjects are marked ergative or absolutive, depending on the transitivity of the nominalized verb (rather than genitive, which is also the case



assigned to noun subjects, as in *armadaren zapalketa* 'the army's oppression'), objects are marked absolutive or, optionally, genitive, as in (37):

- (37) lagunek niri eskutitz-en idaztea gustatzen zait

In contrast with (35), the object of the nominalized form *idaztea* appears with the genitive plural ending, in much the same way as the object of the noun *zapalketa* in (36). Crucially, in these dialects, imperfective (habitual) tenses marked by the homophonous *-t(z)en* may not occur with genitive objects:

- (38) eskutitz-ak (\*eskutitz-en) idazten ditut  
           -A                          -gen write AUX  
 I write letters

If *ari* is a modal-like element occurring with imperfective main verbs, objects of the latter will be marked absolutive, but not genitive. On the other hand, if *ari* is a verb subcategorizing for nominalized clauses marked inesive, the object of the nominalized verb will be able to appear marked genitive in northern dialects. This is in fact the case, as shown by the following sentences (from Lafitte (1979) and the XIXth author Elissamburu):

- (39) a. gu-re lagun-tze]-n ari da  
           we gen help-nom-in AUX  
           He is helping us  
       b. elkharr-en kitzika-tze]-n hari ziren  
           each other-gen tease-nom-in AUX  
           They were teasing each other

In (39a), *gure* is the genitive form of the pronoun *gu* 'we', a case marking possible if *laguntzen* is a nominalized verb complement of *ari*, but not otherwise. In the same vein, some main verbs show some variation in the case of their subcategorized nominalizations. Thus, a verb like *hasi* governs inesive complements as in (40a), but allative is also occasionally available as in (40b):

- (40) a. kanta-tze-n hasi nintzen  
           sing-nom-in begin AUX  
           I began to sing  
       b. kanta-tze-ra hasi nintzen  
           -all  
           I began to sing

Similarly, *ari* may occasionally occur with allative nominalized clauses, as in (41), (Lafitte 1979: 661):

- (41) ha-ren senda-tze-rat ari da  
       he-gen cure-nom-all AUX  
       He is curing him

This is hardly expected if the verb marked *-t(z)en* in *ari* constructions is a main verb with the habitual ending, but follows the same pattern as (40) if *ari* is the main verb itself taking a nominalized complement, like *hasi* or *ikasi* in (24). A similar point has been made above with respect to dative nominal complements of *ari*, in examples like (26).

One of the salient features of *ari* structures is that it is only here that we seem to find two clause-mate absolutive nominals. If *ari* is a pre-auxiliary particle and *-t(z)en* an imperfective marker, it is difficult to imagine how this fact can be handled unless as an exception to the generalization that only one ergative, dative or absolutive argument is allowed per clause. However, if *ari* is a main verb and *-t(z)en* a nominalization, we can claim that one of the absolutive arguments is the external argument (subject) of *ari*, while the other is the absolutive object of the nominalized verb.

Up to now, we have shown that *ari* is a main verb which may appear with noun complements or with nominalized clauses, the latter being generally marked inesive. However, *ari* differs in rather interesting ways from other verbs which subcategorize for inesive nominalized clauses, like *hasi* and *ikasi*. The following section is intended to present the data and to provide an analysis that accounts for the particular properties of the verb *ari*.

### 3.3 Restructuring with *ari*

We have shown in the preceding pages that *ari* is a main verb which subcategorizes for both nominal and sentential complements. The latter type takes the form of a nominalized clause and includes a verb marked by the nominalizing suffix *-t(z)e* case marked by the inesive ending *-n*. In this section we will show that some interesting peculiarities of *ari* with sentential complements can only be accounted for by assuming a restructuring process has taken place. In particular, we propose that a restructuring rule parallel to the one assumed in Rizzi (1982) for Italian is responsible for turning the bisentential representation of *ari* in (42a) to the one in (42b):

- (42) a.  $NP_i$   $_S$  [  $PRO_i$   $_{VP}$  [...V] ] *ari*  
 b.  $NP$   $_{VP}$  [... $v$ , [V *ari*]]

Restructuring forms one single complex verb made up of both *ari* and the embedded nominalized verb (see Hualde (1986) and Ortiz de Urbina (1986) for other cases of restructuring in Basque). As in other restructuring or parallel processes, like clause reduction in Relational Grammar, complements of the embedded verb become complements of the new complex verb, and subject embedded PRO is no longer present. This is possible because both matrix and subordinate clause

in (42a) share the same subject, and in (42b) the superordinate NP is still the subject of the the complex verb *V'*. The fact that sentential complements of *ari* require a PRO subject controlled by the subject of the matrix is far from exceptional. While nominalizations in Basque may have case marked subjects as in (35) above, some matrix verbs require nominalizations with controlled subjects, as in (43) and (44):

- (43) a. [PRO<sub>i</sub> mandolina jotzen] ikasi zuen Peru-k<sub>i</sub>  
                                                   play    learn Aux Peru-E  
           Peru learned (how) to play mandolin  
       b. \*[Jon-ek mandolina jotzen] ikasi zuen Peruk  
                                                   John-E
- (44) a. [PRO<sub>i</sub> eskutitzak idazten] ikusi nuen Peru,  
                                                   letters   write see   AUX Peru-A  
           I saw Peru write letters  
       b. \*[bere seme-ak eskutitzak idazten] ikusi nuen Peru  
                                                   his son-E

*Ikasi* 'to learn' in (43) is a subject control verb, and the subject of its nominalized complement must be an empty element interpreted as co-referential with the superordinate subject. In (44), *ikusi* 'to see' is an object control verb and the empty subject of its complement must be therefore understood as the matrix object *Peru*, rather than the matrix subject 'I'. No overt subject is possible in the nominalized complement, as shown in (43b) and (44b).

Then, in our analysis, a D-structure representation like (45a) would be restructured as (45b):

- (45) a. Mikel<sub>i</sub> <sub>S</sub>[PRO<sub>i</sub> <sub>VP</sub>[eskutitzak idazten]] *ari* INFL  
       b. Mikel <sub>VP</sub>[eskutitzak <sub>V</sub>[idazten *ari*]] INFL

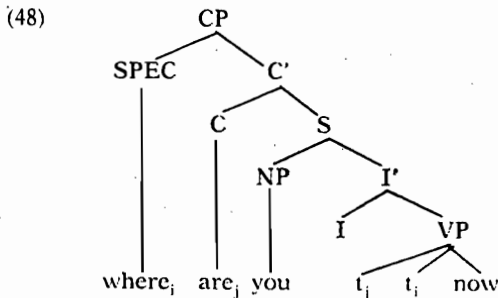
It is precisely the fact that *ari* forms part of a complex verb at S-structure in these constructions that may have lent some support for the auxiliary analysis of *ari*. However, such analysis, as discussed in the preceding pages, is untenable and leaves most aspects of the *ari* construction described above unexplained. We turn now to show how the Restructuring analysis accounts for some interesting facts of sentential *ari* constructions.

In the first place we will consider focus/wh-question related facts. Wh-words and focalized constituents must appear immediately preceding the verb. Thus, *zer* 'what' in (46) must occur immediately preceding the verb *idazten du*, and the same holds true if *eskutitzak* in (47) is the focus of the clause:

- (46) a. zer idazten du Jonek?  
                                           what write AUX John  
                                           what does John write?  
       b. \*zer Jonek idazten du?

- (47) a. *eskutitzak* idazten ditu Jonek  
 letters AUX  
 It is letters that John writes  
 b. \**eskutitzak* Jonek idazten ditu

In (47b) the italicised constituent may not be considered focus, although *Jonek* might be so. Thus, a constituent immediately preceding the verb may be considered to be the focus, but it need not be so. Similar facts in Hungarian are analyzed in Horvath (1981) by assuming a preverbal FOCUS position which serves as landing site for wh-words and foci. Here we will follow Ortiz de Urbina's (1986) analysis, although the particular analysis chosen is immaterial for the following discussion. In the latter analysis, wh-words and foci move to the SPEC position in CP in the syntax, and the verbal adjacency requirement is a reflex of the rule raising the inflected verb to the head C of CP, present also in English questions like (48):



Wh-question formation and focalization proceed in the same way in both matrix and embedded clauses. Wh-words and foci may undergo SPEC-to-SPEC 'upward' movement with bridge verbs, but not 'downward' movement, following the familiar pattern found in other languages with wh-movement in the syntax:

- (49) a. *nor<sub>i</sub>* uste duzu zu-k [ *t<sub>i</sub>* etorri de-la?  
 who(A) think AUX you-E come AUX-that  
 Who do you think has come?  
 b. \* *t<sub>i</sub>*[Jon nor-*k<sub>i</sub>* etorri de-la] uste du?  
 John(A) who-E AUX  
 \* John has come who thinks

The same can be observed in *-t(z)en* complements of verbs like *saiatu* in (50):

- (50) a. *nor<sub>i</sub>* *saiatu* da [ *t<sub>i</sub>* *hurbiltzen*?  
 who(A) try AUX approach  
 Who has tried to approach  
 b. \* *t<sub>i</sub>* [*nor<sub>i</sub>* *hurbiltzen*] *saiatu* da?

The wh-word *nor* 'who' standing for the subject argument of the matrix verb *saiatu* has been lowered to the SPEC position of the embed-

ded clause, where it occurs immediately preceding the verb, and the sentence is ungrammatical. However, *ari* constructions deviate from the normal pattern found in other verbs with inesive nominalized complements in that the structural counterpart of (50b) although marginal, is acceptable for many speakers:

- (51) a. *nor irakurtzen ari da liburua?*  
           who read           AUX book  
           Who is reading the book?  
       b. *?nor ari da liburua irakurtzen?*  
           Who is reading the book?

Since nominalized complements have PRO subjects, *nor* in (51a,b) must correspond to an argument of *ari*. The fact that the interrogative element appears in the absolutive case also supports the contention that it is the subject of the intransitive *ari*, rather than the subject of the transitive embedded verb. However, the interrogative element appears immediately preceding the nominalized embedded verb. A curious restriction on the apparent downward wh-movement constructions with *ari* is that the nominalized verb must be adjacent to *ari*: presence of an intervening element induces ungrammaticality:

- (52) *\*nor irakurtzen orain ari da?*  
                                           now  
           Who is reading now?

We can account for the grammaticality of (51a), as opposed to the ungrammaticality of its counterpart with the predicate *saiatu* in (50b), assuming a restructured analysis with [*irakurtzen ari*] as one single complex verb. Then, in (51a) there is no actual 'downward' movement, since the sentence is monoclausal. The wh-word occurs in the only SPEC position and the whole complex verb has moved to the C position. In (51b), on the other hand, only part of it (*ari*) has been moved to that position. The only instance where an apparent 'downward' movement of the interrogative pronoun appears to occur is when the whole verbal complex V' has moved to the C, in which case any wh-word occurring in the preverbal (SPEC) position will seem to have moved to the pre-verbal position of the 'lower' verb. Since the complex unit [*V-t(z)en ari*] moves as a single constituent, any element intervening between its two subcomponents will produce ungrammatical results, as in (52). Since restructuring reanalyzes *ari* sentential structures, but not parallel ones with *saiatu*, a sentence like (50b) is not acceptable, since *hurbiltzen* cannot be reanalyzed as forming part of a complex expression [*hurbiltzen saiatu*]. Thus, the possibility of apparent 'downward moving' structures like (51a) supports the restructuring analysis proposed here. Although (51a) is an acceptable sentence, matrix subject wh-words tend to be placed immediately preceding the matrix verb *ari* itself, as in (51b). Agreement facts seem to indicate

that in the latter type of questions restructuring has also taken place, but further research should be conducted on the distribution of the two alternatives.

A second argument for restructuring with *ari* comes from some agreement phenomena. Agreement in Basque is strictly local: the inflected element obligatorily includes markers for the ergative, absolutive and dative arguments in its clausal domain. Thus, in (53), the matrix inflection contains a marker for the subject ergative and a third person absolutive marker standing for the sentential object. The absolutive and dative arguments in the embedded clause are not cross-referenced in the inflection, since their clause is tenseless and they cannot be marked in the main clause, as shown in (53b):

- (53) a. [Pobre-ei laguntza ematen] ikasi d-u-te  
 poor-D help give learn 3A-AUX-3E  
 They have learnt to give help to the poor  
 b. \*Pobreei laguntza ematen ikasi d-ie-te

The matrix auxiliary in (53b) contains a marker cross-referencing the dative argument of the embedded clause, violating the locality of the agreement relation. The complex set of data on agreement with *ari* has been sketched in the section 2.1. Here it is sufficient to point out that such 'locality' seems to be exceptionally violated in *ari* constructions, since, as shown in (54i), the matrix inflection may contain a dative marker coindexed with a dative argument in the embedded clause:

- (54) i. Jon [(gu-ri) hurbiltzen] ari za-igu  
 ii. Jon [guri hurbiltzen] ari da  
 John(A) we-D approach 3A-1D  
 John is approaching us

Here *guri* 'to us' receives the thematic role of 'goal' from the verb *hurbildu* 'to approach' (compare *guri hurbiltzen zaigu*, 'he approaches us'), but, despite the fact that it is an argument of the embedded verb, it may show up in the matrix inflection. This can be explained if the structure corresponding to (54i) is not as indicated (that is, the one proposed for similar constructions like (53)), but a restructured uniaxial one like (55):

- (55) Jon (guri) <sub>v</sub>, [hurbiltzen ari] zaigu

*guri* is here a complement of the complex verb, and as such it is cross-referenced in its own clause's inflection. Thus, the restructuring hypothesis allows us to maintain in its full generality the locality restriction on agreement, without introducing unexplained exceptions for *ari* structures. Since *ari* is an intransitive verb, it may contain at most two indices, one for absolutive and one for dative, and therefore the absolutive marker must correspond to the subject of the complex

verb. This means that only the dative maker is free to cross-mark the arguments of the embedded nominalized verb<sup>6,7</sup>. It should be borne in mind that we are claiming the restructuring process to take place optionally only with *ari*. It seems to be the case that *ari* has been transformed into a typical control verb without restructuring in some varieties of Basque. Thus, in dialects where the derived verbal form

(6) The dative marker might also correspond to an «ethic dative», rather than an argument of the lower verb, as *-igu* in (i):

- (i) zahartzen ari zaigu aitona  
get old aux grandfather  
Grandfather is getting old on us

Dative markers may also correspond to arguments of *ari*, when they occur in sentences with nominal complements which have no arguments, as in (ii, iii):

- (ii) hizketa-n ari zaigu  
chat-in AUX  
He is talking to us
- (iii) Keinu-a ari zaigu  
signal-A AUX  
He is waving (his hand) at us

The latter example forms part of a structure discussed for northern dialects in Lafitte (1979:815). Here *ari* takes absolutive nominal complements rather than inesive as seen in most of the examples in this article. Other examples include

- (iv) Zer ari da?  
what (A) AUX  
What is he doing?
- (v) deus ez da ari  
nothing (A) neg AUX  
He is not doing anything

(iv) contrasts with its version in standard dialects (vi), with an inesive complement:

- (vi) zer-tan ari da?  
what-in  
What is he doing?

J. Lakarra (p.c.) points out that the parallel usage of *zer* and *zertan*, absolutive and inesive respectively, is not restricted to northern dialects, since questions like (iv) would be acceptable for many Gipuzkoan speakers, and in Bizkaian at least both (vii) and (viii) are possible:

- (vii) zer zabiltz  
what (A) walk  
What are you doing?
- (viii) zer-tan zabiltz?  
what-in  
What are you doing?

George Rebuschi points out (p.c.) that the verbal root may be used in iterative contexts, rather than the standard inesive nominalized form, as in (vii):

- (vii) Kanta eta kanta ari zen  
sing and sing AUX  
He kept on singing

The following example from Elissamburu's *Pierres Adame* illustrates the same type of structure:

- (viii) Bazian aphurto bat han hari nintzela bil-eta-bil  
was little one there AUX gather-and-gather  
I had been gathering and gathering [plums] for a while

(7) There is one substandard case which can occasionally be found in some speakers where the absolutive marker (or part of it) may actually correspond to an embedded object, rather than to the matrix subject. Thus, some speakers accept sentences like (i):

- (i) Jon gidariari maleta-k ematen ari zaizkio  
driver-D suitcase-Apl give aux  
John is giving the driver the suitcases

Much more research needs to be done on this clearly deviant form in order to determine its actual use in natural environments. The problem is that when the subject is third person singular and the embedded object third person plural, the auxiliary form may (for those speakers) include the absolutive pluralizer infix *izk*, present for all plural absolutive persons along with the absolutive marker itself. Thus, *zaizkio* actually stands for 'they to him' rather than the 'he to him' that would appear in the standard form (*zaiio*). There are several possible interpretations of this phenomenon. Under one possible analysis, the third plural absolutive marking might actually correspond to the embedded third plural absolutive argument, leaving the matrix subject unmarked. Under a different interpretation, such sentences would present a dissociation of the two components of plural absolutive forms: the absolutive third person marker (probably zero in this form) would cross-mark the matrix subject, while the pluralizer infix would correspond to the embedded plural object. Both analyses indicate the highly exceptional status of this phenomenon, which we include here with some reservations as to its genuine character.





Then *gurekin* is an argument of the reanalyzed verbal unit [*kantatzen ari*], as required in the semantic interpretation.

Some dialects provide further evidence for the restructuring analysis proposed here. Agreement-related data occupy an important place in determining the type of structure assigned to *ari* constructions, as seen in the previous section. In most dialects, *ari* subcategorizes for intransitive auxiliaries, with both nominal and clausal complements. Intransitive auxiliaries contain an obligatory absolutive marker and an optional dative one. Since the absolutive marker crossmarks the subject of the complex verb, only the dative marker is left to cross-mark all of the possible complements of the lower verb. Then, dative complements of the latter can be marked in the inflection, but not absolutive complements, the absolutive marker being already 'occupied' by the subject. However, in some dialects, *ari* selects a transitive auxiliary. Examples of this use with nominal complements are given in (60):

- (60) a. euri-a ari du  
rain-A AUX  
It is raining
- b. igortziri-ak ari ditu  
hale-pA AUX  
It is haling

In these weather expressions, the particular product of atmospheric activity is taken as the object, and the verb is marked by a dummy third person ergative (subject) marker. In (60b) the object is plural and hence the absolutive pluralizer infix *-it-* appears in the auxiliary. Transitive auxiliaries minimally include absolutive and ergative markers, with an optional dative marker available. Since the ergative marker is coindexed with the subject of the complex verb, this entails that these dialects have two markers available to cross-reference complements of the 'lower' verb, as opposed to the single dative marker in intransitive *ari* dialects. Then, direct objects of embedded verbs will be able to appear cross-referenced in the inflection, as in (61a), from Lafitte (1979:351), which contrasts with the same sentence in the intransitive *ari* dialect (61b):

- (61) a. sendagile-ak gizon-ak sendatzen ari ditu  
doctor-E man-pA heal AUX  
The doctor is curing the men
- b. sendagile-a gizon-ak sendatzen ari da  
-A -pA AUX  
The doctor is curing the men

The subject *sendagile* is marked ergative in the transitive (61a) and absolutive in the intransitive (61b). Then, the absolutive plural object *gizonak* may be marked in the inflection in (61a), where the absolu-

tive marker is available, but not in (61b). The presence of the absolutive pluralizer infix *-it-* in (61a), just as in (60b) indicates that object agreement has indeed taken place.

Returning to the standard dialect considered here, (61b) shows that the absolutive marking on the inflection corresponds to the subject of *ari* rather than to the object of *sendatzen*, since the latter is absolutive plural and the verb is marked absolutive singular like *sendagilea*. This indicates that when both subject and object of the complex verb are singular or plural, the absolutive ending corresponds to the former, rather than the latter. An interesting side effect of this is that given the possibility of permuting clausal constituents in almost any possible order (and after Restructuring has taken place we have a monoclausal structure), some situations may arise where it is not clear which absolutive constituent is the subject and which is the object. In a sentence like

- (62) eskutitz-a Jon idazten ari da  
 letter-A Jon(A) write AUX  
 Jon is writing the letter

either of the two absolutive nominals might be, in principle, the subject of the complex verb. However, pragmatic considerations favor the interpretation in which *eskutitza* 'letter' is the object and *Jon* is the subject. The situation, however, is different in a sentence like (63) where either nominal qualifies as a potential subject (or object):

- (63) Jon Mikel jotzen ari da  
 Jon(A) Mikel(A) hit aux  
 Jon is hitting Mikel

Given word-order freedom, either interpretation (Jon hitting Mikel or Mikel hitting Jon) should be available. In these cases, however, and unless the extra-sentential linguistic context clarifies the function of each noun, the interpretation is one where the first noun is identified as the subject and the second one as the object. This interpretational strategy supplies further evidence for the contention that Basque has a basic SOV order. In all other contexts in the language, word order is largely irrelevant given the fact that function is easily recoverable from the morphology (case ending), as already noticed by as early authors as Lècluse (J. Lakarra, p.c.). In particular, other sentences involving clausemate subject and object have distinct correlations between case and function: subject will be marked ergative and object absolutive. It is only in *ari* clauses in the standard intransitive dialect that absolutive subject and absolutive object can be clausemate. And it is in this situation, where syntactic function is not recoverable from the morphology or, sometimes, from the context, that one would expect scrambling to be prevented from affecting the two elements. Positional relations are then significant to convey grammatical functions, just



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