

REGARDING BASQUE POSTPOSITIONS AND RELATED MATTERS

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1. Introduction

It is a well-known fact that affixes often arise historically from the phonological and semantic erosion of independent words. This topic has received renewed attention in recent years within Grammaticalization theory, which tries to discover universal paths of development in the creation of grammatical forms (Hopper & Traugott 1993, Bybee et al. 1994, among others). In this paper I simply wish to discuss some cases in Basque that appear to show different stages in this evolution from word to suffix. All the facts to be presented here are well known to Basque scholars. Furthermore, many of them have been treated in a magisterial manner by Rudolf de Rijk in different publications. Since I do not have Professor de Rijk's philological erudition and profound knowledge of the Basque language, there is virtually nothing that I can add to what he has already said on these topics. He has said much more than I could say and in a more insightful way. The only contribution that this paper may make is in presenting known facts from a slightly different perspective.

A stage in the hypothesized evolution from major-category word to affix is that presented by elements known as "adpositions" (prepositions or postpositions). The term "postposition" has been employed in Basque to refer to a somewhat heterogeneous group of elements that, without being inflectional suffixes, are used postposed to a noun phrase. The grammar of Euskaltzaindia, the Basque Academy, which devotes only a few pages of the first volume to this topic, defines postpositions in the following way: "it can be said that postpositions are free forms that express grammatical relations among the phrases of the sentence" (*esan daiteke posposizioak perpausaren sintagmen arteko erlazio gramatikalak adierazten dituzten forma askeak direla*, EGLU-1: 438). According to this definition, postpositions are basically the same kind of syntactic elements as "case marks" (*kasu markak*) with the important difference that they are free forms, i.e. words. The same view is offered in the somewhat longer section on postpositions in Zubiri & Zubiri 1995, which is an excellent pedagogical/re-

ference grammar of Standard Basque, based for the most part on the Academy's grammar (pp. 231-249).¹

After providing this definition, Euskaltzaindia's grammar notices other properties of postpositions, including the fact that many of them can also function as nouns in other contexts. Many postpositions are indeed at least diachronically—in many cases transparently—related to nouns and provide evidence for a grammaticalization path that ultimately leads from free noun form to inflectional suffix (the "noun-to-affix cline" of Hopper & Traugott 1993: 106-108). In our case, we would have something like the following:

Regular noun form > noun acquires specialized idiomatic relational usage
> progressively, nominal properties are lost > case suffix

In general, "postpositions" would be items in the third stage in this evolution.

An interesting point in this path, found with a certain degree of consistency, is the loss of inflection in nominal expressions with an adverbial function. That is, some postpositions are inflectionless nouns which head phrases with an adverbial function. For at least some of them, we have strong evidence that originally the postposition was an inflected noun. In some cases, there is thus one more step in the grammaticalization path:

Regular noun form > noun acquires specialized idiomatic relational usage
> progressively, nominal properties are lost > inflection is lost > (suffix)

This extra step, "inflection dropping", is somewhat unexpected, since it does not appear to result from phonetic reduction. In this paper I would like to consider this and other issues that different Basque postpositions raise from a grammaticalization perspective. We will start with those postpositions that are most like regular nouns and end with a consideration of the difficulties that we face when we want to determine whether a free form has become a suffix (and, therefore, it is no longer a postposition).

2. Noun-like postpositions (relational nouns)

Some items that Euskaltzaindia's grammar includes in the section on postpositions differ very little from regular nouns with a phrasal complement. This is the case with items with locational meaning such as *aurre* "front", *aitzin* "front" (eastern), *atze* "back", *gibel* "back" (eastern), *gain* "top", *behe* "bottom", *azpi* "bottom", *ondo* "side", *alde* "side", *albo* "side" and *arte* "between, among". These elements have received a

¹ Some Basque generative linguists employ the term "postposition" also to refer to elements that are indisputably suffixes, such as *-ra* "to, allative", *-tik* "from, ablative" and *-ekin* "with, comitative". Apparently the reason for this usage is that their translation equivalents in English, Spanish and French are prepositions. In this paper, in agreement with Euskaltzaindia, we will follow the more standard practice of distinguishing between suffixes (bound forms) and postpositions (free forms), although, as we will see, this distinction cannot always be a clear-cut one.

thorough treatment in de Rijk 1990 and I will have essentially nothing to add to what is said in that paper. Like most nouns, these elements can take a complement with genitive inflection. The “postpositions” themselves can be inflected in any of the local cases (locative, allative, ablative):

<i>gure etxe-aren</i>	<i>aurre-an</i>	“in front of our house”
our house-GENsg	front-LOCsg	
<i>zuhaitz ederren artean</i>		“among the beautiful trees”
<i>ohearen azpira</i>		“(to) under the bed”
<i>zubi handiaren aurretik</i>		“from the front of the big bridge”
<i>ohearen azpitik</i>		“from under the bed”

Most of these items can also occur without any complement (e.g. *joan dira aurrera* “they went ahead”, *behean dago* “it is below/at the bottom”), and can receive other types of, non-local, case marking; e.g.: *etxearen aurrea eta alboak zuritu* (EHiz s.u. *aurre*) “to whiten the front and sides of the house”. Structurally *gure lagunaren atzetik* “from behind our friend” does not appear to be very different from, say, *gure lagunaren etxetik* “from our friend’s house”. From these properties we may conclude that these postpositions are, in fact, relational nouns, whose specialized usage derives directly from their meaning. De Rijk 1990 refers to these words as location nouns, not as postposition.

One apparent complication for analyzing elements such as *aurre*, *atze*, etc. as plain nouns is the fact that the preceding noun phrase may sometimes be left uninflected:

<i>etxearen aurrean</i>	- <i>etxe aurrean</i>	“in front of the house”
<i>mahiaren azpian</i>	- <i>mahai azpian</i>	“under the table”
<i>etxearen ondotik</i>	- <i>etxe ondotik</i>	“from next to the house”

Since regular nouns cannot take inflectionless complements, this property would seem to justify treating these elements as postpositions (i.e. as having acquired some properties that distinguish them from nouns).

It appears, however, that, in fact, an example such as *etxe aurrean* must be given a very different analysis from the corresponding variant with the genitive suffix, *etxearen aurrean*. One restriction for the deletion of the genitive mentioned in EGLU-1: 443-444, is that it is not possible with animate nouns. For instance we may have *etxearen ondotik* - *etxe ondotik* “from next to the house”, but only *amaren ondotik*, not ***ama ondotik* for “from next to mother”.² There appears to be another, perhaps more important restriction, not mentioned in EGLU-1, but which de Rijk 1990 points out. This is the fact that the option of leaving genitive inflection out is not available when the noun is modified: *etxe ederraren aurrean*, ***etxe eder aurrean* “in front of the beautiful house”. This indicates that what we have in *etxe aurrean* “in front of the house”, etc. is a type of compounding, as argued by de Rijk 1990. We thus conclude that the examples above conflate two separate cases (on this matter, see also Eguzkitza 1998). First we have structures where a locational noun takes a noun phrase complement in the genitive. On the other hand, we have morphological structures where a locational noun forms a

² I signal examples that I take to be ungrammatical with two asterisks, whereas a single asterisk indicates simply that the form is unattested.

compound with another noun, as in [*etxe-aurre*]/*tik* “from the house-front”. Compound formation can only take place between nouns, not between a noun phrase and a noun. If this is correct, in the genitive-less construction there is no postposition; but, rather a compound noun of the type *etxe-aurre* “house-front”, *zubi-azpi* “bridge-bottom”, *ma-hai-gain* “table-top”, etc., provided with one or another of the local case suffixes. The reason for the ungrammaticality of ***etxe eder aurrean* would be the morphological ill-formedness of ***etxe-eder-aurre* as a compound. As Gorka Elordieta (p.c.) points out, one piece of evidence for the compounding analysis is the fact that coordination is out of the question when the genitive is not expressed: ***zubi eta etxe aurrean* “in front of the bridge and the house” (correct: *zubiaren eta etxearen aurrean*).

The fact that, as shown by de Rijk, prenominal modifiers are acceptable in this construction (as in *Koldoren etxe aurrean* “in front of Koldo’s house” or *gure herriko zubi azpitik* “from under our towns’ bridge”) is compatible with the compounding analysis.

The “postpositions” in the list above are thus nouns with a specialized function, as argued by de Rijk. They represent the very earliest step along the grammaticalization path assumed above. The locational/relational character of some of these nouns may be historically secondary. At least in the case of eastern *gibel* “back” its origin as a non-locational noun, meaning “liver” (a sense still preserved) appears to be clear. The only apparent peculiarity of these locational nouns is that sometimes they seem to take an inflectionless complement. As mentioned, this can be taken to be a compounding process totally compatible with their classification as nouns.

3. True postpositions

In EGLU-1 a criterion that is given for the classification of a given form as a postposition is that the inflection both on the complement and on the postposition itself are fixed.

From our perspective, the fact that the complement of a given postposition takes genitive inflection is not particularly surprising, since this is the marking that phrasal complements of nouns take. An example of this type is *bidez* “by means of”, which is the instrumental form of *bide* “way”: *gure lanaren bidez* “by means of our work”. The difference between postpositions of these types and locational nouns is not great. These can be considered as idiomatic usages of particular nouns, which would be a step along the grammaticalization path.

More different from regular nouns are postpositions that take a complement in a case other than the genitive. If we want to maintain that postposition develop from the grammaticalization of relational nouns, these constructions are problematic: how did the unexpected marking of the complement phrase arise?

Particularly surprising a priori are postpositions whose complement is marked in the dative case. In these constructions the anomalous case marking appears to be due to calque from a Romance model. One such case is the structure NP-dat *buruz* “about NP” based on the indefinite instrumental form of *buru* “head” following a noun phrase in the dative case: *gaurko arazoei buruz mintzatuko gara* “we will speak about today’s problems” is an example cited in EGLU-1. Both the marking on *buru* and the fact that the phrase to which it is attached takes dative inflection are invariable components of this “about” construction.

We may note that this expression does not seem very different in its structural properties from, say, Sp. *de cara a la pared*. It appears that the expression NP-dat *buruz*, which is used in the standard language, but not in the local dialects of the western area, originates in eastern dialects. In these dialects, the expression is first and primarily attested with the meaning "towards" and alternates with NP-all *buruz*, e.g. *etxeari buruz - etxera buruz* "towards the house" (see DGV, s.u. *buruz*). This is in fact very much like Gascon (*de*) *cap à la casa* "towards the house", lit. "(of/with) head to the house" which, with almost complete certainty, is its source, the alternation between dative and allative in Basque reflecting insecurity in the translation between the two values that the Romance preposition *a* may have. In the Basque example what we have is an idiomatic usage of the noun *buru* (in fact, this same instrumental form has other non-postpositional idiomatic usages as in *buruz (ikasi)* "(to learn) by heart") with a phrasal complement. What is anomalous, beyond the specialization of instrumental *buruz* with the meaning "about", is that its complement phrase is in the dative (or allative) and not in the genitive. As we see, both peculiarities can be attributed to its Romance model.

Calque from a Romance source can also be seen as the origin of the dative marking of the complement of *begira* "looking at" and *esker* "thanks to": *mendiari begira* "looking at the mountain", *zuri esker* "thanks to you", the other two postpositions listed in Zubiri & Zubiri 1995 as taking dative complements.

4. Inflectionless postpositions

A very interesting case is offered by a group of postposition which appear in an invariant form, without inflection. This group includes the following items, among others:

alde	herriaren alde	"in favor of the people"
kontra	otsoen kontra	"against the wolves"
kontu	nire kontu	"on me"
eske	batasun eske	"requesting unity"
esku	gure esku	"in our hands"
truk(e)	musu truk	"in exchange for a kiss"

Some of these postposition, such as *eske* "requesting" and *truk(e)* "in exchange for", can appear after an uninflected noun, as shown in the examples, although they can also take a genitive noun phrase. In Larramendi's Basque writings (I use the 1990 edition by P. Altuna and J. A. Lakarra), we find, for instance, *aurchoac ogui esqué ceuden* (34) "the children were asking for bread", with an uninflected form (*ogui* "bread"), but also *Banoaquo bada graciaren esque* (47) "I am going to her to ask for grace, then", with a genitive complement (*graziaren* "grace-gen sg"). As with the locational nouns that we examined in a preceding section, the forms without the genitive can be taken to be compounds. Again, suppressing the genitive suffix does not seem to be an option when compounding is excluded: ***batasun gehiago eske* for *batasun gehiagoren eske* "requesting more unity", ***musu asko truk* "in exchange for many kisses".

All these elements must be treated as something other than relational nouns, since they appear without any inflection. If they headed a noun phrase, we would expect them to bear an appropriate inflectional ending. On the other hand, the nominal ori-

gin of most of them seems clear. In fact, in other contexts some of these postpositions are regular nouns: *esku* is "hand", *alde* is "side", *kontu* is "account" and *truke* is "exchange". The existence of parallel Romance expressions that may have served as models also makes it quite plausible that in their specialized usage as well most of these postpositions originally were regularly inflected nouns with a phrasal complement in the genitive. In some examples this origin is completely transparent. Thus, Spanish *a mi cuenta* (or *a cuenta mía*) was originally calqued with the borrowed noun *kontu*, corresponding to *cuenta*, bearing allative inflection: *nire kontura*, which is still a perfectly common way to express this. Rather surprisingly, though, the case inflection became optional, producing *nire kontu*, with the same meaning. The same development is apparent in *diruaren trukean* > *diruaren truk(e)* "in exchange for money", which mirrors somewhat archaic Spanish *en trueque de dinero*. Again, why was the inflectional ending lost?

It is not hard to see the same source for the postpositions *kontra* "against" and *alde* "in favor of". Spanish *en tu contra* (or *en contra tuya*) would have been calqued by borrowing the relational noun *contra* also as a relational noun with the appropriate morphological inflection as *hire kontran* (attested, if of restricted usage, EHiz, s.u.), which became *hire kontra*, with loss of the inflection. That is, *se puso en mi contra* would have been literally translated as **ene kontran jarri zen*, from which *ene kontra jarri zen* would have arisen by the process of inflection deletion that we have noticed in the examples above.

In turn, Spanish *a tu lado*, the opposite of *en tu contra*, would give rise to *hire aldera*, with the noun *lado* "side" replaced by its native Basque equivalent *alde* "side". By inflection dropping, the expression became *hire alde*, as in Larramendi's example *jaquintsuac guré alde ditugunean* (p. 36) "when we have the wise men on our side". Whereas constructions with the allative form *aldera* are, in fact, used in modern Basque (e.g. *hire aldera* "compared with you, next to you", Sp. "a tu lado"), with the meaning "in favor of" we only find inflectionless expressions in contemporary usage. (Nevertheless, in the DGV some examples of *aldera* "a favor de" are gathered, such as *egite on bat egin du nire aldera* "he has done a good action in my favor"). Exactly the same development, but with borrowing of the noun, is found in its synonymous expression *hire fabore* (cf. Sp. *a tu favor*), much more common than the inflected forms *hire faborean*, *hire faboretan*, *hire faborez*. The expected suffix is already lacking in the first attestations for many of these expressions. Thus our very first writer, B. Etxepare, already writes *ene kontra* "against me", *emazten fauore* "in favor of women".

Incidentally, given this well-exemplified path of development in the case of the borrowed expressions with *kontu*, *truk*, *fabore*, etc., it is very unlikely that Basque *kontra* represents a case of a preposition being borrowed as a postposition (which would be a rather unique case of borrowing, as remarked by Trask 1995). As we have seen in the examples above, in addition to being a preposition, Spanish *contra* is also a noun (as shown by the agreement in *en contra mía*), which in Basque may have also been originally borrowed as a noun. That is, there is no good reason for assuming that the way *kontra* was borrowed differed from the path of borrowing of, say, *fabore*.³

³ Larry Trask (p.c.) tells me that T. Curnow makes a very similar point regarding the origin of Basque *kontra* (Timothy Jowan Curnow, 2001, "What language features can be "borrowed"?". In A. Y. Aikhenvald and R. M. W. Dixon (eds), *Areal Diffusion and Genetic Inheritance*, pp. 412-436. Oxford: Oxford University Press). I have not been able to consult Curnow's work.

The examples where a noun has lost its inflection on its way to becoming a postposition can easily be multiplied. To mention one more, the noun *esku* "hand" appears in uninflected form in its postpositional usage, as in *zure esku dago* "it is in your hands". Both the corresponding Romance construction and the fact that *esku* is primarily a noun suggest that such an expression must have derived from *zure esku(et)an dago*, still perfectly possible as a regular, non-idiomatic, expression.

For *eske* "requesting", DGV and EHiz also list the inflected variants *eskez*, with instrumental inflection, and *eskean*, with locative inflection, all three of them found in 16th-17th century texts. We may assume that in this case as well the inflected forms are older and that *eske* was originally a noun, in which function it is also robustly attested. To give a couple of examples among those cited in DGV: *esqueac jolasa galdu* (RS 122) "the act of asking takes away the fun", and from Axular's Gero *eske haur egiten deratzut* (Ax 597) "I am making this request from you".

Uninflected *etxetik kanpo* - *etxeaz kanpo* "outside of the house" competes in Standard Basque with inflected forms such as *etxetik kanpora*. From the information provided in de Rijk 1990, it can be concluded that inflected forms in the inessive (*kanpoan*) and the ablative (*kanpotik*) have a long tradition and may very well be older. The somewhat surprising thing in this case is that, even though here we are quite obviously dealing with the Spanish noun *campo* "field", an equivalent construction is not found in this language.

Given this path of development from inflected noun to inflectionless postposition, which is transparent, if surprising, in several cases, we may hypothesize the same evolution for other postpositions of less obvious origin. Thus, it is at least possible that the postposition *gabe* - *bage* "without" derives from an older inflected nominal form *gabez*, attested in Exepare's example *onerizte gabez* "without love", through loss of the instrumental ending -z. Whereas *gabe* as a noun meaning "lack, need" is archaic, it is certainly attested (see EHiz, s.u., DGV, s.u.). De Rijk (1972: fn. 19) in fact argues that even in contemporary Basque there are good reasons for considering *gabe* an adjective, and not a postposition.

What we have here, then, is a quite general process of grammaticalization whereby nouns are transformed into inflectionless postpositions in phrases with an adverbial function. The loss of the inflection appears to have operated on an item-by-item basis, rather than being an automatic phenomenon. Thus, whereas, for instance, *nire alde*, *nire fabore* "on my favor" are always used without any inflection nowadays, as the equivalent of Sp. *a mi cuenta* we find both *nire kontura* and *nire kontu*, and imitation of Sp. *a mi modo* has produced *nire modura* (cf. *frantses modura* "à la française", "al modo francés"), but, as far as I know, ***nire modu* (*egin duzu*) "(you did) it my way" is as yet not attested.

We may note, at this point, that the inflectionless use of nouns is also apparent in other constructions with an adverbial value such as *etxez etxe ibili dira* "they went from house to house", *buru-belarri sartuko naiz lanean* "I will get into the work with all my heart" (lit. "head-ear") —in a context where the bare noun cannot be classified as a postposition, since it lacks a dependent phrase. The use of uninflected nominals as predicatives (e.g. *Ameriketean egon zen artzain* "he was in America as a shepherd) could also have been a factor in triggering the dropping of the inflection.

Whereas many of the adverbial noun phrases mentioned in this section appear to be calqued on a Romance model, the deletion of the inflection looks like a specifically

Basque development, since it is not found in the corresponding Spanish expressions. Nevertheless, some cases of apparent "preposition dropping", which would be the equivalent of inflectional suffix dropping in Basque, are also found in the neighboring Romance languages. Examples could be Sp. *mano a mano* (cf. Bq. *eskuz esku*), Fr. *faute de mieux*, etc. Crucially, perhaps, in Gascon we find a number of cases where the preposition *de* can be dropped before a former noun that has been grammaticalized as a preposition. Thus, Palay 1996 gives as examples both *de coste la maysoû* "contre la maison" and *coste l'arriu* "contre, au bord du ruisseau" and *de* is also optional before the preposition *cap* "head" > "towards" in the expression (*de*) *cap à*, which we mentioned above.

5. From postposition to suffix

The "official" definition of postposition requires us to be able to distinguish between free forms and affixes. The most advanced forms in the grammaticalization path that we have traced would have lost their character of being morphologically free, i.e. independent words. A problem that we face is that it is not always clear when we have free forms and when we do not. In grammar as in life, freedom can be relative.

Let us consider a couple of examples where we seem to be beyond the free-form stage. The ending *gatik* "because of" is sometimes written as a separate word, but most often as a suffix: *gizonagatik* or *gizonarengatik* "because of the man". In some grammars it is included under the nominal case suffixes and it receives the name of "motivative" case. In EGLU-1 a reason that is given not to consider it a postposition, but, rather, a suffix, is the fact that, whereas true postpositions can be coordinated, this possibility is not open for *gatik*; that is, we can have *zure alde eta fabore* "in your favor", *zure kontra ala alde* "for or against you" but not, ***amarengan ala gatik aurkitu duzu laguntza?*, lit. "did you find help in or because of your mother?" (EGLU-1: 445).

Given the existence of the Bizkaian variant *gaitik*, the nominal origin of this suffix —i.e. an inflected, ablative, form of the noun *gai* "matter"— seems obvious (cf. Michelena 1977: 92). A form such as *gizona(ren)ga(i)tik* can easily be analyzed as *gizon-aren gai-tik* "from the matter of the man". Here we would thus have a case where the evolution from noun to inflectional suffix has been accomplished. This evolution, however, is not equally advanced everywhere. In Lekeitio (HEE: 108) its accentuation clearly shows that prosodically it is an independent unit, not a suffix: *amúma (g)áittik* "because of grandmother" (if it were a single form we would not find more than one accent).

A more advanced case of grammaticalization is presented by the so-called terminative suffix *-raíno* "up to", whose evolution is studied in detail in de Rijk 1992. As Trask (1997: 93) notes, this case ending is morphologically complex, since it "is formed from the allative by the addition of *-ino*". This morphological fact is transparently obvious. Nevertheless, I was quite surprised when I found out when working with Gorka and Arantzazu Elordieta that in Lekeitio what we have is not *-ra-ino*, but rather *-ra áiño*, with an accented postposition: *Ondarrúra áiño* "up to Ondarroa", *etxera áiño* "up to the house", *etxietára áiño* "up to the houses" (HEE: 107). For this reason, this ending was not included among the case suffixes in HEE but, rather, in the section on postpositions.

The Lekeitio form *áiño* suggests an older form with an initial consonant, most likely **gaiño*. In fact, it is difficult not to see a connection with the form *gino* which,

with the same meaning, is found in other Bizkaian varieties, from RS to some present-day dialects, as de Rijk 1990 points out: *etzegino* “up to the house” (Gaminde 1988: 139), *inurria guino lagun gura* (RS 81) “even an ant wants company”. De Rijk reconstructs **gaindo*, which would be an ancient allative form of *gain* “top”.⁴ Given the existence of Bizkaian *ginoan* “to the extent of”, Sp. “en la medida en que”, (EHiz, s.u., *ba-koitzak ahal duen ginoan* “each one to the extent that s/he is able”) it is also possible to see here a noun **gaino* “measure, extent, amount”. In this case, *etxeraino* “up to the house” would derive ultimately from **etse-ra gaino-(g)an* “in the amount to the house”, with later deletion of the inflectional suffix on *gaino*.

Be this as it may, the thing to be noticed is that the Lekeitio forms *gáittik*, *gáiño* are neither true suffixes (since they are accentually independent) nor syntactically free forms. Rather, they are something in between, for which we may want to use the term “clitic” (although the fact that they are accented would also exclude them from the clitic category in some definitions of this term).

6. Where are the word boundaries?

In most languages, the concept of word is intuitively clear. After all, the nowadays widespread convention of leaving spaces between words as we write relies on our ability to identify word boundaries without much effort. Nevertheless, when we want to be precise and find clear criteria for defining wordhood, problematic or ambiguous cases often arise. This is certainly the case in Basque. In this section I will list some of the cases of problematic morphological freedom in Basque, to put the above discussion on postpositions in perspective. All the cases to be mentioned are well known, but perhaps they are not always given the attention that they deserve as they bring into question the possibility of applying strict criteria for distinguishing words from non-words.

To begin with, consider the case of the article. Definite articles in Basque are written as part of the preceding word, even though nominal inflection in Basque is phrasal in scope. We write *gizon handia* “the big man” although syntactically what we have is more or less [*gizon handi*]-*a*. There are good reasons for this convention. As is well known, in

⁴ I must admit that I don’t find de Rijk’s 1990 evidence for an ancient allative suffix **-do* particularly compelling. Unless I am missing something, de Rijk’s argument relies on three distinct pieces of evidence: 1) the High Navarrese form *bateo* - *batio* “together (with)” cf. Sp. “a una (con)”, which he reconstructs as **batedo*, that is, the numeral *bat* “one” plus a suffix *-do*; 2) the dialectal forms *egundo* “until today”, *oraindo* “until now” and 3) the word *ezkerdo* “left handed”, for which the original value “to the left” is proposed. Starting from the end, as de Rijk notes in a footnote, there is an alternative explanation for the suffix of *ezkerdo* “left handed”, i.e. the derivational suffix that we find in forms such as *ugerdo* “rusty” and, with devoicing after a voiceless fricative, *koipezto* “greasy”, *pekazto* “freckly” (< Sp. *peca* “freckle”), etc., which indicates a negative physical quality. In fact, this may be the same ending we have in Sp. *zurdo* “left handed”, of uncertain etymology. As for *egundo*, *oraindo*, these could very well be syncopated forms of *egundaino*, *oraindaino*, with the same meaning (The evolution —leaving aside the palatal or alveolar character of the nasal and the nasalization of vowels— may have been *egundaino* > **egundano* > **egundao* > *egundo* or *egundaino* > **egundino* > **egundio* > *egundo*, both paths seem plausible). As is well known, grammatical forms often undergo more radical changes than lexical words. The final vowel of High Navarrese *bateo* - *batio* remains unexplained. Could this be the same *-o* we find in the Gipuzkoan Goierri in ablative forms such as *lurretio* “from the land” (for common *lurretik*)?

their citation form nouns and adjectives are usually provided with the article, as Landucci's Basque informants did (how do you say "man" in Basque? *gizona*). In fact, the feeling that the article is part of the word even misled some early writers into thinking that every Basque noun and adjective ends in *-a*! Phonologically, definite articles show every sign of being part of the word to which they are attached orthographically. This can be seen in the fact that they create the context for the application of a number of phonological rules that are strictly restricted to the word domain, a topic which, for the Bizkaian dialect, received an insightful treatment in de Rijk 1970 and with which I have also been concerned (Hualde 1991, 1999, Hualde & Gaminde 1997). Thus, for instance, in many Basque dialects final mid vowels rise before the article as in *etxe*, *etxia* "house, the house"; something which never happens across word boundaries; e.g., *etxe andi (bat)* "(a) big house" is not ***etxi andi* (or even across a compound boundary, *seme-alabak* "sons and daughters"). Similarly, in some western varieties, an epenthetic segment has developed between an original /i/ and another vowel, both morpheme-internally, as in *nobixo* (< Sp. *novio*), and in sequences involving the article, as in *mendixa* "the mountain". It is evident that this rule is also restricted to the word-internal environment, since, again, we do not find ***mendix andi* for *mendi andi* (nor do we have epenthesis in compounds, *jai-egun* "holiday", *segi-aldi* "persecution", HEE: 40). The examples can be easily multiplied, since there is in fact a great number of rules applying to forms provided with the article in different dialects, a phenomenon which already attracted the attention of our first dialectologist, L-L. Bonaparte, given the diversity of dialectal outcomes or "euphones" in vowel sequences found in inflected forms.

But if the phonological reasons for considering the article a type of suffix, in spite of its syntactic scope, are strong, we may wonder about the convention of writing the demonstratives —from which the articles are historically derived— as separate words instead. This convention appears to be justified in dialects that preserve the aspiration, since the phoneme /h/ is otherwise not found in suffixes. But many Basque speakers pronounce *gizon hari* "to that man", *gizon harentzat* "for that man" in exactly the same way as *gizonari* "to the man", *gizonarentzat* "for the man". For these speakers, including perhaps an absolute majority of Standard Basque speakers, this is an orthographic distinction without apparent linguistic justification. Furthermore, in some western and central dialects vowel sequences involving demonstratives receive the same treatment as those created by the definite article. Thus, in Ondarroa, where, when provided with the article, *etxe* becomes *etxi* and *mendi* becomes *mendixe*, we also find *ori etxi ori* "that house" and *ori mendix ori* "that mountain" (the duplication of the demonstrative before and after the noun being a feature of the Bizkaian area). In these dialects, at least, it is clear that the postposed demonstratives must be treated as suffixes, not as independent words. To give examples from a geographically distant variety, Zubiri (2000: 86) reports entirely comparable facts for the dialect of Arano, in Navarra: *bide*, *bidia*, *bidi au* "road, the road, this road", *belarri*, *belárriya*, *belárry yau* "ear, the ear, this ear" (nevertheless, he writes the demonstrative as a separate word!). Clearly, different dialects may be at different points along the grammaticalization path that leads from independent word to suffix. In Standard Basque, which was initially developed to serve as a written standard, distinguishing in writing between *gizon hari* and *gizonari* is a convenient convention, but if we want convincing proof that demonstratives are indeed independent words in this linguistic variety, we may not find any, given the impoverished phonology of the standard language.

We may now consider the indefinite article, *bat*, which is also written as an independent word. Again, in some dialects it seems to have reached some degree of affixhood. This is so in the Navarrese and other varieties where *asto bat* "a donkey" is realized as *astoat*. In dialects where /a/ is raised to /e/ after a high vowel, so that we have, for instance, *gizon/gizona* "man/the man" but *lagun/lagune* "friend/the friend" the indefinite article may or many not undergo the rule; in some of these areas we find *lagun bet* and in others *lagun bat*.

Probably the clearest evidence for word or affix status is found in dialects with an accentual rule that targets a position at a certain distance from a word boundary. As is well known, in Zuberoan, where the accent regularly falls on the penultimate syllable of the word, we find *gizun/gizuna* "man/the man", and also *gizún bat* "a man", with accent shift, which argues in favor of writing *gizúnbat*, instead. Consequently with this, the 17th century Souletin writer, Jean de Tartas generally writes *bat* attached to the previous word in the noun phrase: *soldado gaixto bat*, *Capitano cruel bat*, *tyranno misericordia gabebat* "an evil soldier, a cruel captain, a ruthless tyrant". Bonaparte's Zuberoan collaborator, Inchauspe, who employs accent marks, writes *aingurú bat*, *semé bat*. But, again, the cross-dialectal evidence does not all point in the same direction. Another dialect with an accentual rule that targets the penultimate syllable is Lekeitio. In Lekeitio, as in other northern Bizkaian varieties, there is a distinction between lexically accented and unaccented morphemes. Unlike in other dialects of the same area, in words containing at least one accented morpheme the accent always surfaces on the penultimate syllable. Thus, words such as *léku* "place" and *libúru* "book", which possess lexical accent, show shift of the accent to the penultimate in all their inflected forms: *lekúa* "the place", *lekúra* "to the place", *lekuráko* "for the place"; *liburúa* "the book", *liburuári* "to the book, dative", *liburuentzako* "for the book". Applying the position of the accent as a criterion, the indefinite article *bat* is not part of the preceding word in Lekeitio, since what we find is *léku bat* "a place", *libúru bat* "a book" and not ***lekú bat*, ***liburú bat*.

Another difficulty arises in regard to the preverbal "particles". In Basque only a few "particles" can occur between participle and auxiliary in affirmative sentences. These include elements such as *ote* (Bizkaian *ete*) "perhaps", *omen* (Bizkaian *ei*) "seemingly", *ba* "if", *bait* "subordinator", which are always placed immediately before an inflected verbal form. Using the accentual criterion given above, in HEE we concluded that in Lekeitio *ete*, *ei* and *ba* are in fact accented prefixes, whose accent appears on the penultimate syllable of the word of which they form part: *lagúnak etorri-dira* but *lagúnak etorri ei-dira*, with an accent on the auxiliary introduced by the prefix (HEE: 57). For *ei* we have confirming evidence for affixhood in the fact that it requires epenthesis before a vowel-initial verbal form, as in the Ondarroa children's song popularized by Oskorri: *Adolfok eín eixeban laztozko zubixe* "Adolfo wanted to make a straw bridge"; that is, /eixeban/. The norm is to write *ba* as a prefix, but *ote - ete*, *omen - ei* as separate words. In the dialects of Lekeitio and Ondarroa, at least, this norm does not seem to have much phonological justification at all. This does not mean, of course, that the facts will be the same in every dialect, as we saw above for the determiners.

One of these "particles" where the usage has fluctuated, until a few years ago Euskaltzaindia established an orthographic rule, is the subordinator *bait*. One reason that may have had an influence in giving this "particle" prefix status for orthographic purposes appears to be the phonological alternations in which it is involved, as in *bait*

dira → *baitira* “since they are”, *bait gara* → *baikara* “since we are”. The existence of this somewhat striking alternation would be the same reason that led the anonymous author of the love poem published in Michelena (1964: 122) to write *bat* as a suffix in *linda eder galampat* “a beautiful, gallant belle”. We have a similar case in *daukanez gero* > *daukan ezkeru* “since s/he has it”, where the application of devoicing has led to the reassignment of word boundaries.⁵ All of this is consistent with the phonotactic constraint that disallows word-internal sequences such as ***itka*, ***atpa*. However, it is not obvious that this alternation unequivocally indicates word-internal status for the sequences in question. The alternation involves two processes. One is the deletion of stops in preconsonantal position. This consonant cluster phenomenon, in fact, has very broad application and is free to apply across word boundaries in natural discourse. The second process is the devoicing of the remaining voiced stops. This devoicing process, on the other hand, is of much more limited application. An interesting fact is that it cares very much about the syntactic nature of the element containing the target segment, but much less so about the nature of the trigger. In particular, devoicing is far more common with inflected verbs than with participles or nouns. Whereas, for instance, *gizonak daki* “the man knows it” is very often pronounced as *gizona-taki*, *??gizona-tarnu du* for *gizonak damu du* “the man is sorry” is, at least, much less common. In a conversation about these things, a native Bizkaian speaker once told me about his surprised amusement when he finally understood that what for years he had interpreted as *Artolate-ko* “of Artolate”, in a well-known folk song, was in fact *Artolak deko* “Artola has it”. Continuing with anecdotal evidence, right after the Basque Academy had made its pronouncement on how to write verbal forms preceded by *bait*, a fellow linguist (and writer) with an unusually rich and nuanced native command of the language, expressed to me that whereas saying and even writing, *baita*, *baitira*, *baikara*, felt right to her, she was much less comfortable with, for instance, *baikintuzten* for *bait gintuzten* “since they had us”. Clearly for many speakers only certain words, including the most common conjugated verbal forms, but not less common ones, are natural targets of devoicing. Clearly, also, the application of cluster simplification-cum-devoicing does not constitute evidence that the relevant sequence is word internal. That is, concluding that *bait* is a prefix solely on the evidence of forms like *baitira* (for *bait dira* “since they are”) would lead us to give *Artolak* prefix status in the example discussed above, undoubtedly an undesirable result.

A last case that I would like to mention, although there are others, is that of the analytical or periphrastic verbs. Nowadays in Basque verb-related information is most frequently conveyed by combining a main verb and an auxiliary, as in *ikusiko ditut* “I will see them”. Main verb and auxiliary are normally written as separate words. The fact that they can be separated by the “particles” discussed in the prior section (*ikusiko omen ditut* “it appears that I will see them”) and are inverted in negative clauses (*ez ditut mendiak ikusiko* “I won’t see the mountains”) shows that they are syntactically indepen-

⁵ In Trask’s (1997: 197-198) view, forms such as *norbait* “someone”, *zerbait* “something”, etc. would have their origin in a reanalysis of the same type (e.g. *nor bait-zen* > *norbait zen*). However, Etxepare (to appear) has recently proposed a more convincing hypothesis, according to which these forms have resulted from free relatives. One of the virtues of Etxepare’s hypothesis is that it explains some rare vowel-final forms.

dent words. Nevertheless, in their normal, non-inverted order, participle and auxiliary sometimes undergo special contractions. Already in Axular we find contracted forms such as *bilhatzeintuzu* (par. 157, for *bilhatzen dituzu*) "you look for them", *largatzeintuzu* (par. 159) "you give them away", necessarily written as single words, since they involve metathesis of segments between participle and auxiliary (Some modern dialects present similar cases of metathesis; thus, in Mezkiriz *egiten dute* → *iteunte* "they make it", Salaberri 2000: 242).⁶ In Lekeitio, where we can use the position of lexical accents introduced by specific morphemes to determine word boundaries, participle and auxiliary do indeed behave as a single accentual word. Thus, for instance the accent of the future suffix *-ko*, appears in the penultimate in *gixona etorrikó-da* "the man will come", *gixónak etorriko-dira* "the men will come". However, as shown in HEE: 57-58, no such fusion takes place either when the participle is under focal accent (*gixona etorriko da* "the man WILL come" or the auxiliary bears a complementizer (*gixona etorriko dala* "that the man will come").

The more and more frequent application of contraction between participle and auxiliary may lead to the disappearance from the language of the uncontracted forms. One place where that has happened is Bermeo. In Bermeo Basque it is simply impossible to obtain a "word form" for certain auxiliary forms. For instance, corresponding to literary Bizkaian *deustazu* "you V it to me" we only find a suffix *-stasu* (e.g. *ekarristasu* "you have brought it to me", *emostasu* "you have given it to me", *emotestasu* "you give it to me", *emongostasu* "you will give it to me", *estasu ekarri* "you have not brought it to me"), and corresponding to *deutzut* "I V it to you" we find *-tzut* (Egaña 1984, Gaminde 1985, 1988). Clearly these forms are not well-formed words in Bermeo Basque and must be analyzed as suffixes. These auxiliary forms indisputably have become something less than words in Bermeo. On the other hand, for some other combinations of arguments we do find sequences that are segmentable as words, such as *dost* "s/he V it to me". (At the other end of the country, a similar case is found in Roncalesse *xoan ztei* "go, you-pl!")

Given the fact that participle and auxiliary can be inverted, auxiliaries cannot be considered real suffixes from a syntactic point of view. Nevertheless it is clear that they are not always full words either and that phonologically they may in fact behave like suffixes added to the participle.

To conclude somehow, in Basque, as in other languages, several domains can be distinguished from the point of view of the application of phonological rules (this was perhaps the main topic of Hualde 1991). One of these domains may correspond to the morphological word. But in addition to word and affix boundaries, we need other units to account for all the complexity that is found.

In Lekeitio, where the accentual facts offer a particularly clear view of phonological domains, in addition to words, we need to recognize the existence of both clitic groups and compounds, from an accentual point of view. As mentioned before, the word is the domain for the assignment of lexical accents to the penultimate syllable, as well as the domain for a number of segmental rules. In clitic groups an accent is assigned at the

⁶ In Lekeitio there is also metathesis of the nasal in forms such as *esan dotzut* → *esaontzut* "I have told you" (G. Elordieta, p.c.).

boundary between host and clitic, as in *laguná-be* “the friend too”, except that this accent does not surface if the host is already an accented word, as in *lagúna-pe* (for *lagúnak be*) “the friends too”. Finally, in many compounds an accent is also assigned but, in Lekeitio, this accent also moves to the penultimate, as in *begigórri*, *begigorridxa* “red-eyed, the red eyed one” (cf. the phrase *begi gorridxa* “the red eye”, HEE: 55). The special accentuation of compounds (as compared to phrases) is common in those western dialects that have preserved contrastive accent. At the other end of this area, in Goizueta, Navarre, we find, for instance, a contrast between the phrase *lán berria* “new work” and the compound *lanbérria* (Zubiri 2000: 96). On the other hand, compounds are different from simplex words in that some segmental rules affecting vowels are often blocked across a compound boundary, as also mentioned above. If we return to the consideration of verbal prefixes and auxiliaries, we notice that in Lekeitio these elements do not behave like regular clitics, since their accent moves to the penultimate of the domain. On the other hand, segmentally they undergo a number of rules which are blocked across the members of a compound, suggesting a weaker boundary (an affix boundary).

It is clear that all Basque varieties do not treat the same morphological elements in the same manner: a given item may be a clitic or even an independent word in one dialect and a suffix in another. Regarding Standard Basque, this variety simply lacks most of the phonological complexity found in local dialects, both at the segmental and at the suprasegmental level. This being the case, the decision to write determiners, auxiliaries and other items considered above as separate words or not (i.e. to give them word status or not) can only be made in a more-or-less arbitrary manner when we find disagreement among the local dialects. All of this has something to do, I believe, with the category “postposition”, which has been the central topic of this paper.

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