

SYNTACTIC EVIDENCE IN FAVOR OF DEGREES OF INCORPORATION IN [N+EGIN] CONSTRUCTIONS

ABSTRACT

Frequent constructs of the type [N + EGIN] play an important role in the grammar of Basque as productive verbal complex forms. In this paper we present a number of [Noun + EGIN] constructs of Basque that derive from transitive predicates. An Incorporation hypothesis is proposed to account for these verbs. Within this hypothesis we consider degrees of Incorporation.

Both transitive verbs and locutions of this type have the same structural representation. The crucial difference between them is that the transitive verbs project a non-bound D.O. NP at the overt-syntax, whereas the NP of the locutions is bound. Evidence for transitivity and incorporation at the various levels is presented, by means of tests such as insertion and word order change, topicalization, partitive marking and verbal focalization.

Locution is a compound verbal construction formed by a non-determined indefinite common noun and a dummy verb (meteorological locutions are exceptional in their determined nature). It is not by chance that the noun is undetermined. The fact that the determiner position is empty, as far as the syntactic projection is concerned, functions as a justification for incorporation, there is no barrier blocking movement and the noun may raise to the position where N+V incorporation takes place. As suggested by Richard Kayne (personal communication) the lack of the determiner functions as a formal reason for lexical incorporation.

The fact that we have a dummy verb is also a reason for incorporation in terms of semantic features. The dummy verb needs to receive a meaning from the incorporating noun, and the noun functions as its semantic base.

The various syntactic behaviors shown by the [_vN+EGIN] structures are explained as displaying more or less advanced stages of Incorporation. Application of different interacting levels at which incorporation takes place leads us to group a number of incorporated constructions of Basque into two main classes: TypeI or *alde egin* 'to escape' type, Type IIa or *negar egin* 'to cry' type and TypeIIb or meteorological locutions such as *elurr-a egin* 'to snow' which are also included within TypeII.

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