

## Grammatical relations in Basque

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### 1. Introduction

Basque is a language without known surviving relatives spoken by some 700,000 people in the Basque Country (Araba, Biscay, Gipuzkoa and Navarre in northeastern Spain, and Labourd, Low Navarre and Soule in southeastern France), in addition to some small Basque-speaking communities found in the Americas. It is used by bilingual speakers of all ages, but the highest percentages and/or numbers of speakers are found mainly in non-metropolitan areas of Biscay, Gipuzkoa, and Navarre. There are several regional varieties and a standardized form (*euskara batua*), which is the one addressed in this study.

Basque morphology is largely agglutinative, i.e., it is predominantly concatenative and of separative exponence (except in the person-number inflection of verbs), with some flexivity (i.e., the allomorphy found in inflectional phenomena is not purely phonological) in both the verbal and nominal domains. Basque clauses show double-marking patterns and pragmatically conditioned deviations from the default SOV constituent order.

The present paper surveys the argument selectors found in different areas of Basque grammar. Overt coding selectors are presented in Section 2 (with 2.1 covering the relatively straightforward dependent-marking patterns and 2.2 addressing the comparatively convoluted head-marking ones). Section 3 surveys behavioral selectors involving coreference (adverbial clauses, as well as control and raising phenomena), while Section 4 deals with other behavioral selectors (relativization sites, focus constructions, and subject of imperatives, with

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some comments on Basque voice). The conclusions presented in Section 5 characterize Basque as a showing a complex picture regarding grammatical relations. From the perspective of Chomskyan linguistics, unproblematic notions like subject, direct object, and indirect object are instantiated in quite intricate ways, especially by the verb morphology, which makes for an interesting kaleidoscope of coding details related to both the lexicon and the grammar of the language. From the perspective of functionalist-typological linguistics, highly problematic notions like subject and object are shown to be particularly tricky in Basque morphology, but much less so in Basque syntax.

## 2. Overt coding selectors

### 2.1 Dependent marking

When overt, the NP expressing the single argument of a monovalent verb of simple clauses (S) is most often found in the unmarked absolutive case. In (1), for instance, the S of the verb *hil* ‘die’, i.e. *gizona* ‘the man’, appears unmarked:

- (1) *Gizon-a*            *hil*            *d-a*.  
 man-DET[ABS]    die.PFV      TAM-TAM  
 ‘The man has died.’

This is certainly so with patientive monovalent verbs (“unaccusatives”), which align with motion and posture verbs. Agentive monovalent verbs (“unergatives”), by contrast, show some variation regarding how the nonstandard varieties treat them—roughly, their S tends to appear in the absolutive in the east and in the ergative in the west.<sup>2</sup> In Standard Basque, some monovalent verbs like *irakin* ‘boil’ have their S appear in the ergative (an “extended ergative” according to Dixon 1979; cf. Ortiz de Urbina 1989):

- (2) *Ura-k*            *irakin*            *d-u*.  
 water-ERG      boil.PFV      TAM-have  
 ‘The water has boiled.’

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Albizu (2009a), but see Berro (in progress) for a more fine-grained analysis.

Bivalent predicates come in three guises. The ergative-absolutive pattern can be illustrated with *ikusi* ‘see’; the agentive argument (A) takes ergative case marking (-*k*) while the patientive argument (P) appears in the unmarked absolutive:

- (3) (*Ni-k*)            (*zu*)            *ikusi*            *z-a-it-u-t*.  
 1SG-ERG            2SG[ABS]    see.PFV            2.I-TAM-PL-have-1SG.II  
 ‘I have seen you (SG).’

The absolutive-dative pattern, on the other hand, can be illustrated with *gustatu* ‘please’; the experiencer A bears dative case and the stimulus P is unmarked:

- (4) (*Ni-ri*)            *ardo-a*            *gustatzen*            *z-a-i-t*.  
 1SG-DAT    wine-DET[ABS]    please.IPFV            TAM-TAM-DF-1SG.III  
 ‘I like wine.’

Further examples of this pattern can be found with extra-thematic datives (4-5):

- (5) (*Ni-ri*)            *ume-a*            *ezkutatu*            *z-a-i-t*.  
 1SG-DAT    kid-DET[ABS]    hide.PFV            TAM-TAM-DF-1SG.III  
 ‘The kid has hidden from/on me.’

- (6) (*Ni-ri*)            *katu-a*            *hil*            *z-a-i-t*.  
 1SG-DAT    cat-DET[ABS]    die.PFV            TAM-TAM-DF-1SG.III  
 ‘My cat has died.’ or ‘The cat has died on me.’

Lastly, some bivalent verbs (like *begiratu* ‘look’) take an ergative-dative case frame:

- (7) *Irakasle-a-k*            *haserre*            *begiratu*            *d-i-Ø-e*  
 teacher-DET-ERG    angrily            look.PFV            TAM-DF-3.III-PL  
*ikasle-ei*.  
 student-DET.PL.DAT  
 ‘The teacher has looked angrily at the students.’

While the choice between bivalent case frames is normally conditioned by the choice of the particular verb, numerous verbs appear in more than one frame of different valency, like *iritsi* (which means ‘arrive’ in the monovalent absolutive-only frame and ‘reach’ in the bivalent ergative-absolutive frame) and *heldu* (which also means ‘arrive’ in the monovalent absolutive-only frame but ‘grab’ in the bivalent ergative-dative frame).

With trivalent verbs like *eman* ‘give’, the A<sub>3</sub> takes ergative case and the G dative case, whereas the T appears in the unmarked absolutive:

- (8) *(Ni-k)*      *(zu-ri)*      *liburu-a*      *eman*      *d-i-zu-t.*  
 1SG-ERG    2SG-DAT    book-DET[ABS]    give.PFV    TAM-DF-2.III-1SG.II  
 ‘I have given you (SG) a book.’

Nominal forms different from the absolutive, ergative and dative are also found in simple clauses. P’s can appear in the partitive in polarity contexts, for instance, but the partitive-absolutive opposition systematically conveys a difference in definiteness:<sup>3</sup>

- (9) a. *(Ni-k)*      *diru-a*                      *d-u-t.*  
 1SG-ERG    money-DET[ABS]    TAM-have-1SG.II  
 ‘I have some/the money.’
- b. *(Ni-k)*      *ez*    *d-u-t*                      *diru-rik.*  
 1SG-ERG    NEG    TAM-have-1SG.II      money-PART  
 ‘I do not have any money.’
- c. *(Ni-k)*      *ez*    *d-u-t*                      *diru-a.*  
 1SG-ERG    NEG    TAM-have-1SG.II      money-DET[ABS]  
 ‘I do not have the money.’

With motion verbs, local cases are employed to express goals or sources (10). Basque studies regard such verbs as intransitives, and verb morphology indeed treats such arguments just like adjuncts (i.e., it does not acknowledge their presence in the clause).

- (10) a. *(Ni)*              *etxe-ra*                      *joan*              *n-a-iz.*  
 1SG[ABS]    house-ALL.DET      go.PFV              1SG.I-TAM-be

<sup>3</sup> The partitive is occasionally regarded as a case on a par with the other grammatical and semantic cases, but most authors nowadays consider it to be a determiner instead (e.g. Trask 2003: 124, based upon De Rijk 1972).

‘I have gone home (lit. to the house).’

- b. (*Ni*)            *etxe-tik*                    *etorri*            *n-a-iz.*  
 1SG[ABS] house-ABL.DET            come.PFV 1SG.I-TAM-be  
 ‘I have come home (lit. from the house).’

Besides, animate goals (and also sources) can be expressed with the dative case:

- (11) a. (*Ane*)            *Jon-i*            *negarrez*            *joan*            *z-a-i-o.*  
 Ane[ABS] Jon-DAT            tear.INSTR            go.PFV TAM-TAM-DF-3SG.II  
 ‘Ane has gone to Jon crying.’
- b. (*Ane*)            *Jon-i*            *negarrez*            *aldendu*            *z-a-i-o.*  
 Ane[ABS] Jon-DAT            tear.INSTR            go.PFV TAM-TAM-DF-3SG.II  
 ‘Ane has got away from Jon crying.’

For purposes of both dependent and head marking, location and motion verbs would then constitute additional valency classes, with location and one-argument directed motion verbs as A+P predicates on the one hand and causative location and causative directed motion as A<sub>3</sub>+T+G predicates on the other. This would in turn lead to an S/A/T (ABS)—A<sub>3</sub> (ERG)—P/G (local case) pattern (i.e., accusative with dedicated A<sub>3</sub>-marking and “quirky” T marking). We have disregarded them in the discussion here.

Case patterns for core arguments of simple clauses can then be summarized as in Table 1 below and described as an array of lexically conditioned splits. It should have become apparent that case alignment patterns are only superficially “ergative-absolutive” in the classic sense. Even though this is indeed found when comparing the first monovalent class with the first bivalent class, the patterns found taking all classes into account show split-S, split-A, and split-P.<sup>4</sup> The T aligns together with the P of most, but not all, bivalent classes, and the G aligns with the P of the third bivalent class; only by omitting the latter class from the picture could one classify Basque case as being of the indirective type. Only by disregarding the

<sup>4</sup> In addition, western varieties of Basque show different kinds of differential object marking and differential object indexing (governed by person, animacy, and definiteness) that make the general picture more intricate (cf. Fernández & Rezac 2010, to appear, Odria 2012).

second bivalent class could one say that there is a unified A category across valency classes for purposes of case marking.<sup>5</sup>

*Table 1. Core-case-marking patterns in Basque*

	ABS	ERG	DAT
monovalent 1 ( <i>etorri</i> ‘come’)	S		
monovalent 2 ( <i>irakin</i> ‘boil’)		S	
bivalent 1 ( <i>ikusi</i> ‘see’)	P	A	
bivalent 2 ( <i>gustatu</i> ‘please’)	P		A
bivalent 3 ( <i>begiratu</i> ‘look’)		A	P
trivalent ( <i>eman</i> ‘give’)	(T)	A <sub>3</sub>	G

## 2.2 Head marking

Only a handful of high-frequency verbs (‘go’, ‘come’, ‘bring’, etc.) and the auxiliaries (‘be’ and ‘have’) can take indexes for core syntactic arguments directly; most verbs are conjugated combining an aspectually marked participle with an auxiliary marked for T[ense-]A[spect-]M[ood] as well as person and number of the arguments, and the present outline will focus on such patterns. The auxiliary *izan* ‘be’ is employed when there is no argument in the ergative in the clause (i.e., when only an absolutive or an absolutive and a dative argument are present). The other auxiliary can be reconstructed as *\*edun* ‘have’ and is used when there is an argument in the ergative (e.g. with monovalent predicates where there is no absolutive argument, or bivalent predicates where there is an absolutive and an ergative argument). The counterparts of *izan* and *\*edun* in the subjunctive and imperative modes are *\*edin* and *\*ezan* respectively. *\*Ezan* is also attested with trivalent predicates in the same contexts. With trivalent predicates, furthermore, where there is an absolutive, an ergative, and a dative argument, the auxiliary root does not appear on the surface form of the inflected auxiliary; on the other hand, an applicative-like element *-(k)i*, called D[ative] F[lag], appears on such

<sup>5</sup> The *ari*-progressive construction shows quite different case patterns (roughly, the S is not split, but the A and the P are, and only the absolutive and dative cases are used). Nevertheless, this construction is not available for all aspectuality classes; only so-called degree achievements (i.e. achievements with a subevent structure that expands over time; cf. Laka 1993) are compatible with it, e.g. *ekarri / ekartzen* ‘carry’ can appear in the construction while *eraman / eramaten* ‘bring, go, spend’ cannot (Alcázar 2003). Most importantly, this construction is best analyzed as biclausal (Hualde & Ortiz de Urbina 1987; see also Laka 2006) and is therefore not formally equivalent to the simple clauses discussed here. We have not included this (and other such biclausal constructions) in the present survey.

“trivalent auxiliaries”—actually, on any auxiliary covering a configuration that includes an argument in the dative.<sup>6</sup>

The morphological make-up of inflected auxiliaries is the following (adapted from Trask 1997: 106). (The factors governing the form and appearance of the different morphemes are complex; in what follows, we concentrate on person marking, with some occasional comments on number marking, of arguments.)

(12) ARG1/TAM-(TAM)-(PL)-(root)-(DF)-(ARG2)-(ARG3)-(PL)-(TAM)<sup>7</sup>

There are three argument-marking positions and three sets of indexes for arguments, which are given in Table 2 below. These affixes distinguish three persons, two numbers, and (only for the 2nd person singular) familiarity/honorificity; Set II and Set III 2nd person familiar forms further distinguish two genders (*-k* ‘M’ vs. *-n* ‘F’). Note that Set II and Set III suffixes are the same for 1st and 2nd persons but differ for 3rd person (at least in the singular, see below). Some allomorphy rules apply; e.g., *-t*, *-k*, and *-n* are the word-final allomorphs; they appear as *-da*, *-a*, and *-na* if followed by another suffix, be the latter personal or aspecto-temporal.

Table 2. Basque indexes (simplified)

	Set I	Set II	Set III
1SG	<i>n-</i>	<i>-t</i>	<i>-t</i>
2SG.FAM <sup>8</sup>	<i>h-</i>	<i>-k/-n</i>	<i>-k/-n</i>
1PL	<i>g-</i>	<i>-gu</i>	<i>-gu</i>
2	<i>z-</i>	<i>-zu</i>	<i>-zu</i>

<sup>6</sup> The morpheme *-(k)i* has been called not only “dative flag” (Trask 1995, Rezac 2006) but also “dative pre-suffix” (Hualde 2003: 210); the applicative analysis has been suggested by Elordieta (2001), Rezac (2006) and Fernández (2012, 2014). See Trask (1997: 227f, 245f) for a historical perspective on this morpheme.

<sup>7</sup> There is also a small set of 2nd person singular markers that distinguish male from female addressees that are *not* arguments. Such so-called allocutive forms appear under specific sociolinguistic and syntactic conditions and increase the number of entities indexed on the verb (and on the auxiliary used), but the indexing pattern of arguments proper does not change (Rebuschi 1984, Oyharçabal 1993, Alberdi 1994, 1995), so we have disregarded them here.

<sup>8</sup> The opposition between the etymological 2nd person singular (*hi* and all its corresponding verbal markers) and the etymological 2nd person plural (*zu* and all its corresponding markers) has changed in the modern varieties of the language. Roughly, *hi* became much less widely used (Alberdi 1994, 1995; Amorrortu 2003), *zu* became the unmarked 2nd person singular, and a new 2nd person plural *zuek* (again, with its own set of corresponding verbal markers) was created (cf. Trask 1997: 96, 106f). We have glossed *hi* and its verbal counterparts ‘2nd person familial’ here; *z-* and *-zu* are glossed in all examples as (default) 2nd person for simplicity.

3	—	—	-o / -Ø
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There are two slots for number marking on the auxiliary; the leftmost hosts the element *it-*, which corresponds to a (sometimes merely etymologically) plural argument; the rightmost slot hosts the marker *-e ~ -te*, which corresponds to 2PL or 3PL arguments in the absolutive, ergative, or dative. The 3rd person markers have been the topic of much discussion in Basque studies; in several forms, the lack of a Set I 3rd person prefix allows a TAM prefix *d- ~ l- ~ z- ~ b- ~ Ø-* to occur in the first slot.<sup>9</sup> We treat the 3SG.DAT marker as nonzero here (3PL.DAT *-e* is analyzed as *-Ø-e*).<sup>10</sup>

In the present, the perfect, and some other TAM paradigms (illustrated here with auxiliaries in the present), the arguments in S, P, and T function are indexed via a Set I marker in position ARG1 on the verb or auxiliary; in (12) below, this is illustrated by the 1SG prefix *n-* for the S in (a) and the P in (b) and (e). The other core arguments are indexed via suffixes, e.g. the Set II 1SG.A suffix *-t* in (b) and (f), as well as the Set III 2SG.G suffix *-zu* in (f). Example (c) is the notional converse of (b); the 1SG.P is indexed via the Set I marker *n-* and the 2SG.A is indexed via the Set II marker *-zu*:

- (13) a. (*Ni*)            *hil-go*        *n-a-iz.*  
           1SG[ABS]        die-FUT        1SG.I-TAM-be  
           ‘I will die.’
- b. (*Ni-k*)        (*zu*)            *ikusi*        *z-a-it-u-t.*<sup>11</sup>  
           1SG-ERG    2SG[ABS]        see.PFV        2.I-TAM-PL-have-1SG.II  
           ‘I have seen you (SG).’
- c. (*Zu-k*)        (*ni*)            *ikusi*        *n-a-u-zu.*  
           2SG-ERG    1SG[ABS]        see.PFV        1SG.I-TAM-have-2.II  
           ‘You (SG) have seen me.’
- d. (*Ni-k*)        *Jon*            *ikusi*        *d-u-t.*  
           1SG-ERG    J.[ABS]        see.PFV        TAM-have-1SG.II  
           ‘I have seen Jon.’

<sup>9</sup> This is the account espoused in most studies (Euskaltzaindia 1987b: 142-43, Laka 1988, and Trask 1997, among others). An alternative analysis is found in Hualde (2003: 206f), which treats these elements as 3rd person markers.

<sup>10</sup> The alternative analysis of these suffixes consists in postulating two slots but only one suffix set, which leaves 3SG.DAT *-o* unexplained.

<sup>11</sup> The prefix *it-* in several 1PL and 2[NFAM] forms is originally an absolutive pluralizer; it is synchronically unmotivated with 2nd person forms, but diachronically expected because the default 2nd person forms were originally plural (cf. Footnote 6).



- e. *Jon-ek* (ni) *ikusi* *n-a-u*.  
 J.-ERG 1SG[ABS] see.PFV 1SG.I-TAM-have  
 ‘Jon has seen me.’
- f. (*Ni-k*) (*zu-ri*) *liburu-a* *eman* *d-i-zu-t*.  
 1SG-ERG 2SG-DAT book-DET[ABS] give.PFV TAM-DF-2.III-1SG.II  
 ‘I have given you (SG) a book.’

Note that, while the A and G display the full range of person and number possibilities in indexing, the T distinguishes singular from plural but can only be 3rd person with trivalent verbs.<sup>12</sup> Interestingly enough, this constraint on the absolutive participant is not active in the absence of an ergative participant, e.g. with extra-thematic datives in the context of monovalent motion verbs (either directly on the lexical verb or on the auxiliary):<sup>13</sup>

- (14) a. (*Ni*) *Jon-i* *n-a-tor-ki-o*.  
 1SG[ABS] J.-DAT 1SG.I-TAM-come-DF-3SG.III  
 ‘I come to Jon.’
- b. (*Ni*) *Jon-i* *etorri* *n-a-tza-i-o*.  
 1SG[ABS] J.-DAT come.PFV 1SG.I-TAM-be-DF-3SG.III  
 ‘I have come to Jon.’

In sum, the simplified template capturing the structure of these auxiliaries and the indexes from the perspective of grammatical relations with the present auxiliary is as summarized in Table 3:

Table 3: Indexing on auxiliaries I

PERFECT	{Set I}	{Set III}	{Set II}
monovalent 1	S		

<sup>12</sup> This (“*me-lui*”) constraint has attracted some attention in Basque studies (Albizu 1997, 1998; Ormazabal and Romero 1998, 2001, 2007); similar constraints are found in Romance and other languages (Bonet 1991, 1995; Haspelmath 2004, 2008, 2009; Zúñiga 2011).

<sup>13</sup> The status of such conjugated forms, however, is not identical; those like *natorchio* ‘I come to him’ are found in everyday speech, whereas those like *natzai* lit. ‘I am to him’ belong to the formal register and are found mostly in written texts. Trivalent verbs not obeying this constraint are attested in early Lapurdian (Oyharçabal & Etxepare 2012), as in the following examples from Leizarraga:

*Anaiak* *gomendatzén* *z-e-ra-u-z-ki-o-te-t* *Iankoari*.  
 brothers[ABS] commend.IMPFV 2.I-TAM-CAUS-have-PL-DF-3SG.III- PL-1SG.II God.DAT  
 ‘Brothers, I commend you to God.’ (Acts 20.32)

bivalent 1	P		A
trivalent	T	G	A <sub>3</sub>

Before taking other predicate classes into account, TAM forms other than the present and the perfect (which employs present-tensed auxiliaries) need to be considered in order to arrive at a comprehensive picture of the indexing patterns of the language. In the simple past (and conditional), e.g., some indexes systematically pattern in a different fashion, leading to something that can be analyzed as a person-base split.

First consider the examples in (14) below. Monovalent predicates index their S just like in the perfect for all persons, viz. via Set I prefixes (*n-* ‘1SG’ in (a)). Bivalent predicates in 1st-2nd person interactions index their arguments just like in the perfect, i.e., allomorphs of Set I prefixes are used for P’s (*z-* ‘2’ in (b) and *n-* ‘1SG’ in (c) respectively) and Set II suffixes encode A’s (*-da* ‘1SG’ in (b) and *-zu* ‘2’ in (c) respectively). Interactions between two 3rd persons can be analyzed as conforming to this pattern as well, with the proviso that the 3rd person absolutive is unmarked (d):

- (15) a. (*Ni*)            *etxera*            *joan*            *n-in-tze-n*.<sup>14</sup>  
           1SG[ABS]    house.DET.ALL    go.PFV        1SG.I-TAM-be-PST  
           ‘I went home.’
- b. (*Ni-k*)    (*zu*)            *ikusi*            *z-in-tu-da-n*.  
           1SG-ERG    2[SG.ABS]    see.PFV        2.I-TAM-have-1SG.II-PST  
           ‘I saw you (SG).’
- c. (*Zu-k*)    (*ni*)            *ikusi*            *n-in-du-zu-n*.  
           2SG-ERG    1SG[ABS]    see.PFV        1SG.I-TAM-have-2.II-PST  
           ‘You (SG) saw me.’
- d. (*Hark*)    (*hura*)            *ikusi*            *z-u-en*.  
           3SG.ERG    3SG.ABS    see.PFV        TAM-have-PST  
           ‘S/he saw him/her.’

<sup>14</sup> Trask (1997) postulates two slots before the first pluralizer, viz. one for a TAM marker and a second one occupied by a semantically opaque segment *n*, which only occurs on some forms. Since we are not aware of any role- or reference-marking functions of this nasal segment, we have chosen to treat such sequences as monomorphemic here for expository convenience.

In interactions between speech act participants and 3rd persons, by contrast, Set I prefixes mark the 1st/2nd persons irrespective of function and, at least according to the analysis espoused here, the 3rd person (either absolutive or ergative) is unmarked:<sup>15</sup>

- (16) a. *(Ni-k)*      *Jon*      *gogoratu*      *n-u-en.*  
 1SG-ERG    J.[ABS]    remember.PFV    1SG.I-have-PST  
 ‘I remembered Jon.’
- b. *Jon-ek*      *(ni)*      *gogoratu*      *n-in-du-en.*  
 J.-ERG      1SG[ABS]    remember.PFV    1SG.I-TAM-have-PST  
 ‘Jon remembered me.’

This person-based split in Basque indexing has been the matter of some debate in the literature. Laka (1988), for example, calls the phenomenon “ergative displacement” (the *n*-agreement prefix and others behaving just like it is then considered a “displaced” ergative agreement suffix). Following Hale (2001), Fernández (1997) sees it as an instance of “eccentric agreement” (*n*- is then regarded as an absolutive prefix eccentrically assigned to the ergative argument; a typological parallel can be found in the “spurious antipassive” of Chukchi (Hale 2001, Bobaljik & Branigan 2006). Even though the presentation in terms of person split is less informative and less explanatory than these other analyses, we have opted for a theoretically-neutral presentation here.

Trivalent predicates (see (16) below) display a similar person-based split. 1st and 2nd person A’s are marked via Set I prefixes (*n*- ‘1SG’ and *z*- ‘2’) while 3rd person A’s take the zero ergative suffix; the (3rd person) T is unmarked (but takes a plural prefix *z*- and a dative flag *ki*-, not shown here), and the G is consistently marked via a Set III suffix (*-zu* ‘2’, *-da* ‘1SG’, or *-o* ‘3SG’).

- (17) a. *(Ni-k)*      *(zu-ri)*      *liburu-a*      *eman*      *n-i-zu-n.*  
 1SG-ERG    2-DAT      book-DET[ABS]    give.PFV    1SG.I-DF-2.III-PST  
 ‘I gave you (SG) the book.’
- b. *(Zu-k)*      *(ni-ri)*      *liburu-a*      *eman*      *z-en-i-da-n.*  
 2-ERG    1SG-DAT      book-DET[ABS]    give.PFV    2.I-TAM-DF-1SG.III-PST  
 ‘You (SG) gave me the book.’

<sup>15</sup> Observe that plural 3rd persons trigger an *it*- or a *-te* marker.

- c. (*Ni-k*)      (*hari*)      *liburu-a*      *eman*      *n-i-o-n*.  
 1SG-ERG    3SG.DAT    book-DET[ABS]    give.PFV    1SG.I-DF-3SG.III-PST  
 ‘I gave him/her the book.’
- d. (*Hark*)      (*ni-ri*)      *liburu-a*      *eman*      *z-i-da-n*.  
 3SG.ERG    1SG-DAT    book-DET[ABS]    give.PFV    TAM-DF-1SG.III-PST  
 ‘S/he gave me the book.’

Therefore, the template capturing the structure of these auxiliaries and the indexes from the perspective of grammatical relations in the past and conditional is as summarized in Table 4:

Table 4. Indexing on auxiliaries II

PAST/COND	{Set I}	root	{Set III}	{Set II}
monovalent 1	S			
bivalent 1, 1/2↔1/2, 3↔3	P			A
bivalent 1, 1/2→3	A			
bivalent 1, 3→1/2	P			A
trivalent 1/2.A	A <sub>3</sub>		G	
trivalent 3.A	(T)		G	A <sub>3</sub>

In order to arrive at a complete picture of indexing patterns, we now include the patterns found with other valency classes. First, there is one more monovalent class (e.g. *irakin* ‘boil’), whose auxiliaries take the same indexing as bona fide bipersonal forms, both in the present/perfect and in the past:

- (18)a. *Ura-k*      *irakin*      *d-u*.  
 water-ERG    boil.PFV    TAM-have  
 ‘The water has boiled.’
- b. *Ura-k*      *irakin*      *z-u-en*.  
 water-ERG    boil.PFV    TAM-have-PST  
 ‘The water boiled.’

Other candidates for monovalent predicates, like compound predicates with *egin* ‘do, make’ are problematic. First, they come in two forms. Those like *barre egin* ‘laugh’ take an argument in the ergative, with according auxiliary morphology:

- (19) a. (*Ni-k*)      *barre*    *egin*      *d-u-t*.  
           1SG-ERG    laugh    make      TAM-have-1SG.II  
           ‘I have laughed.’
- b. (*Ni-k*)      *barre*    *egin*      *n-u-en*.  
           1SG-ERG    laugh    make      1SG.I-have-PST  
           ‘I laughed.’

Meteorological compound predicates like *euria egin* ‘rain’, on the other hand, take their overt argumental NP in the absolutive:<sup>16</sup>

- (20) a. *Euri-a*      *egin*      *d-u*.  
           rain-DET    make      TAM-have  
           ‘It has rained.’
- b. *Euri-a*      *egin*      *z-u-en*.  
           rain-DET    make      TAM-have-PST  
           ‘It rained.’

Despite the differences between these two *egin*-predicates (e.g., *barre* ‘laugh’ is a bare nominal while *euria-a* ‘(the) rain’ is an NP with a determiner; there are also potentially two overt (pro)nominals in the clause with *barre egin* and only one with *euria egin*) and some debate in the literature, it seems adequate to regard such constructions as instances of non-prototypical syntactically bivalent clauses (instead of, e.g., bona fide nominal incorporation; cf. Etxepare 2003: 397f). In other words, we follow Etxepare (2003) in considering the first clause in (20) monovalent and the second one bivalent:

- (21) a. *Jon-ek*      *dantzatu*    *d-u*.

<sup>16</sup> Such compound meteorological predicates can also appear with “aspectual datives” (Fernández & Ortiz de Urbina 2010). In those cases, the noun appears in the dative expressing inchoative or progressive aspect, the lexical verb is *eman* ‘give’ rather than *egin* ‘do’, and the auxiliary is morphologically tripersonal, e.g. *euriori eman dio* ‘it has started raining’ and *euriori eman zion* ‘it started raining’. Nevertheless, these aspectual datives are not restricted to meteorological predicates and are frequently used in other contexts such as *Jonek lanari eman dio* ‘Jon has started working.’

- J.-ERG dance(v.) TAM-have  
 b. *Jon-ek dantza egin d-u.*  
 J.-ERG dance(n.) make TAM-have  
 Both: ‘Jon has danced.’

Second, there are two more bivalent classes, viz. those exemplified in Section 2.1 above with *gustatu* ‘please’ and *begiratu* ‘follow’. Only the latter class shows a person-based split in the past similar to the one we saw above for the *ikusi*-class:

- (22) a. *(Ni-ri) ardo-a gustatzen z-a-i-t.*  
 1SG-DAT wine-DET[ABS] please.IPFV TAM-TAM-DF-1SG.III  
 ‘I like wine.’  
 b. *(Ni-ri) ardo-a gustatzen z-i-tza-i-da-n.*  
 1SG-DAT wine-DET[ABS] please.IPFV TAM-TAM-be-DF-1SG.III-PST  
 ‘I liked wine.’
- (23) a. *Irakasle-a-k haserre begiratu d-i-Ø-e ikasle-ei.*  
 teacher-DET-ERG angrily look.PFV TAM-DF-3.III-PL student-  
 DET.PL.DAT  
 ‘The teacher has looked angrily at the students.’  
 b. *Irakasle-a-k haserre begiratu d-i-Ø-e ikasle-ei.*  
 teacher-DET-ERG angrily look.PFV TAM-DF-3.III-PL student-  
 DET.PL.DAT  
 ‘The teacher looked angrily at the students.’  
 c. *(Ni-k) haserre begiratu n-i-Ø-e-n*  
 1SG-ERG angrily look.PFV 1SG.I-DF-3.III-PL-PST  
*irakasle-ei.*  
 student-DET.PL.DAT  
 ‘I looked angrily at the students.’

Thus, we arrive at the fairly complex picture detailed in Tables 5 through 7 below. Basically, the only arguments that are marked in an invariable fashion are G, which is always indexed via Set III suffixes in the second slot reserved for arguments, and (3rd-person) T,

which merely triggers plural marking in a predictable way. S's, A's, P's and even A<sub>3</sub>'s show splits with respect to TAM and person values.

Table 5. Indexing patterns with monovalent predicates

	{Set I}	root	{Set III}	{Set II}
monovalent 1 ( <i>etorri</i> 'come')	S			
monovalent 2 ( <i>irakin</i> 'boil')				
- PRES				S
- PST (1/2)	S			
- PST (3)				S

Table 6. Indexing patterns with bivalent predicates

	{Set I}	root	{Set III}	{Set II}
bivalent 1 ( <i>ikusi</i> 'see')				
- PRES	P			A
- PST 1/2↔1/2, 3↔3	P			A
- PST 1/2→3	A			
- PST 3→1/2	(P)			A
bivalent 2 ( <i>gustatu</i> 'please')	P			A
bivalent 3 ( <i>begiratu</i> 'look')				
- PRES			P	A
- PST 1/2↔1/2, 3↔3	A		P	
- PST 1/2→3	A		P	
- PST 3→1/2	(A)		P	

Table 7: Indexing patterns with trivalent predicates (e.g. *eman* 'give')

	{Set I}	root	{Set III}	{Set II}
PRES	(T)		G	A <sub>3</sub>
PST 1/2.A	A <sub>3</sub>		G	
PST 3.A	(T)		G	A <sub>3</sub>

### 3. Behavioral selectors involving coreference

#### 3.1 Adverbial clauses

The interpretation of coreferentiality relations between main and adverbial clauses relies heavily on lexical semantics and context; basically, any core argument (S/A/A<sub>3</sub>/P/T/G) in the matrix clause can control any core argument in the adverbial clause. The example below shows that either the A (*Jon*) or the P (*Ane*) of the former can be coreferential with the A of the latter:

- (24) *Jon-ek Ane ikusi z-u-en korrika egiten*  
 J.-ERG A.[ABS] see.PFV TAM-have-PST race make.IPFV  
*ari z-en bitartean.*  
 PROG TAM-PST while  
 ‘Jon<sub>i</sub> saw Ane<sub>j</sub> while he<sub>i</sub>/she<sub>j</sub> was running.’

#### 3.2 Control and raising

##### *Control*

*Saiatu* ‘try’, *hasi* ‘begin’, and *amaitu* ‘finish’ are subject control verbs; they are limited to arguments in S/A/A<sub>3</sub> function and take a nominalized verbal complement in *-t(z)en*. Examples from Goenaga (1985) follow:

- (25) a. *Lan-a garaiz amaitzen saiatu n-a-iz.*  
 essay-DET[ABS] on.time finish.NMLZ try.PFV 1SG.I-TAM-be  
 ‘I have tried to finish the essay on time.’
- b. *Lan-a berandu idazten hasi naiz.*  
 essay-DET[ABS] late write.NMLZ begin 1SG.I-TAM-be  
 ‘I have started writing the essay late.’
- c. *Lan-a berandu idazten amaitu d-u-t.*  
 essay-DET[ABS] late write.NMLZ finish.PFV TAM-have-1SG.II  
 ‘I have finished writing the essay late.’



*Raising*

The literature on Basque mentions two raising predicates, viz. *eman* ‘give’ and *iruditu* ‘appear, seem’. Non-raising examples are given in (2), their raising counterparts appear in (3) below:

- (26) a. *Ematen d-u Jon nekatuta dago-ela.*  
 give.IPFV TAM-have J. tire.PCPLE s/he.is-SUB  
 b. *Ba-d-irudi Jon nekatuta dago-ela.*  
 BA-TAM-seem J. tire.PCPLE s/he.is-SUB  
 Both: ‘It seems that Jon is tired.’ (Artiagoitia 2003: 653-654)

- (27) a. *Jon-ek nekatuta ematen d-u.*  
 J.-ERG tire.PCPLE give.IPFV TAM-have  
 b. *Jon-ek nekatuta d-irudi.*  
 J.-ERG tire.PCPLE TAM-seem  
 Both: ‘Jon seems tired.’

For most speakers, such raising constructions are restricted to 3rd persons (Artiagoitia 2003: 655). Interestingly enough, the S/A/A<sub>3</sub> of the subordinate clause seems to be the preferred —rather than obligatory— argument; a small but non-negligible number of 21 speakers in a survey accept examples like the following (Artiagoitia 2003: 655), where the argument is in P and G function respectively:

- (28) a. <sup>?</sup>*Jon-ek ematen du norbaitek jo egin d-u-ela.*  
 J.-ERG give.IPFV TAM-have someone.ERG hit do.PFV TAM-  
 have-SUB  
 ‘Jon seems to have been hit by somebody.’  
 b. <sup>?</sup>*Jon-ek ematen du norbaitek min egin*  
 J.-ERG give.IPFV TAM-have someone.ERG pain do.PFV  
*d-i-o-la.*  
 TAM-DF-3sg.III-SUB  
 ‘It seems that someone has caused Jon pain.’

Basque translational equivalents of clauses with predicates like *want*, *believe*, *know*, and *judge* are not raising constructions.

#### 4. Other behavioral selectors

Several behavioral selectors do not define restrictive (“subject-like”) grammatical relations in Basque, viz. floating constructions and obligatorily filled positions. Similarly, relativization (4.1) and focus constructions (4.2) are available for all argument types explored in this study, i.e. S, A, P, A<sub>3</sub>, T, and G. Subjects of imperatives (4.3), by contrast, work on a quasi-semantic basis, centering as they do on S, A, and A<sub>3</sub>. Voice phenomena (4.4) are somewhat less straightforward but confirm the privileged status of S/A/A<sub>3</sub> pivots on the one hand and the slightly less core-like status of G’s on the other.

##### 4.1 Relativization site

With monovalent and bivalent predicates there are no restrictions: it is possible to relativize over S (a), A (b), and P (c) with the appropriate choice of auxiliary (originally *da* ‘s/he is’ in (a), *du* ‘s/he has it’ in both (b) and (c)):

- (29) a. *Liburutegi-tik etorri d-en mutil-a Jon da.*  
 library-ABL come.PFV TAM-REL boy-DET J. s/he.is  
 ‘The boy who has come from the library is Jon.’
- b. *Liburu-a irakurri d-u-en mutil-a Jon da.*  
 book-DET[ABS] read.PFV TAM-have-REL boy-DET J. s/he.is  
 ‘The boy who has read the book is Jon.’
- c. *Jon-ek irakurri d-u-en liburu-a*  
 Jon-ERG read.PFV TAM-have-REL book-DET[ABS]  
*Atxaga-ren-a da.*  
 A.-GEN-DET s/he.is  
 ‘The book that Jon has read is Atxaga’s.’

Trivalent predicates allow their G to be relativized over:<sup>17</sup>

- (30) a. *Liburu-a eskatu d-i-o-da-n mutil-a*  
 book-DET[ABS] ask.PFV TAM-DF-3SG.III-1SG.II-REL boy-DET[ABS]  
*Jon da*  
 J. s/he.is  
 ‘The boy I have asked the book from is Jon.’
- b. *Liburu-a eman d-i-o-da-n mutil-a*  
 book-DET[ABS] give.PFV TAM-DF-3SG.III-1SG.II-REL boy-DET[ABS]  
*Jon da*  
 J. s/he.is  
 ‘The boy I have given the book is Jon.’

#### 4.2 Focus constructions

Nonverbal focalization, whether regarding a question word or an NP, is associated with the preverbal position in the clause (the verb can be analytically conjugated, as in (a), or synthetically inflected, as in (b) below):

- (31) a. *Zer egiten d-u-zu zuk hemen?*  
 what do.IPFV TAM-have-2.II 2SG.ERG here  
 ‘What are you (SG) doing here?’
- b. *Jon-ek daki hori.*  
 J.-ERG s/he.knows that  
 ‘Jon knows that.’

There are no restrictions as to the function in which these focalized elements can bear: S, A, P, A<sub>3</sub>, T, and G, as well as adjuncts, are all grammatical and idiomatic foci in Basque.

#### 4.3 Subject of imperatives

Basque commands can be expressed by different structures, viz. (i) a nonfinite form consisting of the bare participle,<sup>18</sup> (ii) a finite form (either with an inflected auxiliary or

<sup>17</sup> See Oyharçabal (2003) for more details on relativizing on dative-marked arguments.

directly inflected—the latter for the same reduced number of verbs that take personal inflection in the indicative), and (iii) several other indirect strategies (roughly comparable to English *no smoking* or *you don't want to write him*). We comment on the former two here.

The nonfinite imperative can only have a 2nd person S/A/A<sub>3</sub> subject, i.e., other persons or core arguments (or adjuncts) cannot be construed as the addressee of a command or request:

- (32) a. *Etorri hona!*  
 come.PFV here.ALL  
 ‘Come (SG/PL) here!’ (S)
- b. *Utzi bake-a-n!*  
 leave.PFV peace-DET-LOC  
 ‘Leave (SG/PL) [me] alone (lit. in peace)!’ (A)
- c. *Eraman Mikel-i ardo-a etxe-ra!*  
 take M.-DAT wine-DET[ABS] house-DET.ALL  
 ‘Take the wine to Mikel’s house!’ (A<sub>3</sub>)

Similarly, periphrastic finite imperatives take the verb root and a 2nd person S/A/A<sub>3</sub> imperative auxiliary. The P, T, or G cannot be construed as the addressee of a command or request with these forms, either:

- (33) a. *Etor zaitetzte!*  
 come IMPER.2PL  
 ‘Come (PL)!’ (S)
- b. *Egin ezazu!*  
 make/do IMPER.2SG→3SG  
 ‘Do (SG) it!’ (A)
- c. *Ez itzazu bota!*  
 NEG IMPER.2SG→3PL throw.away  
 ‘Do not (SG) throw them away!’ (A<sub>3</sub>)
- d. *Eman i-eza-i-o-zu ama-ri!*  
 give DF-IMPER-DF-3SG.III-2.II mother-DAT  
 ‘Give it to my mother!’

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<sup>18</sup> The verb root occurs in such forms mainly in eastern dialects.

Again, only S/A/A<sub>3</sub> subjects are possible with finite imperatives. Examples follow:

- (34) a. *Zatoz arin!*  
 come.2 quickly  
 ‘Come (SG) quickly!’ (S)
- b. *Zatoz-ki-t arin!*  
 come.2-DF-1SG.II quickly  
 ‘Come (SG) to me quickly!’ (A)
- c. *Esa-i-o-zu ama-ri!*  
 say-DF-3SG.III-2.II mother-DAT  
 ‘Say (SG) it to mother!’ (A<sub>3</sub>)

Finally note that there are also jussive forms not restricted to 2nd person participants in S/A/A<sub>3</sub> functions. Periphrastic imperatives are constructed with the monovalent auxiliaries *bedi* for 3SG and *bitez* for 3PL, in addition to a whole array of bivalent forms (ABS+DAT). Besides, transitive forms such as *beza* for 3SG and *bezate* for 3PL are also available, along with their ditransitive counterparts. All these imperative forms take the prefix *b*, for 3SG S and P.-. Most of these archaic jussive forms are no longer used in current everyday speech.

- (35) a. *Etor bitez!*  
 come JUSS.3PL  
 ‘Let them come!’ (S)
- b. *Zilegi bekit!*  
 allow JUSS.3SG→1SG  
 ‘May it be allowed to me!’ (A)
- c. *Bekite egi-a!*  
 know.JUSS.3PL truth-DET[ABS]  
 ‘May they know the truth!’ (A)
- d. *Bekarkit ni-ri berriz diru-a!*  
 bring.3SG→1SG 1SG-DAT back money-DET[ABS]  
 ‘May s/he bring the money back to me!’ (A<sub>3</sub>)

Another possibility to express 1PL or 3SG/3PL subjects is with subjunctive/subordinate forms, e.g. *goazen kalera!* (go.SUBJ.1PL street.ALL) ‘let’s go to the street!’ and *datozela gero!* (come.3PL.SUB soon) ‘may/let them come soon!’. These forms also allow for S/A/A<sub>3</sub> subjects only.

#### 4.4 Voice

The default causative in Basque is formed by suffixing *-erazi* ~ *-arazi* (or some other dialectal variant; Western Basque has *eragin* ‘cause’ here) (cf. Trask 1997: 231-232 and Ortiz de Urbina 2003: 593-595):

- (36) a. *Negar egin-arazi d-i-zu-t anitz aldiz.*  
 cry do-CAUS TAM-DF-2.III-1SG.II many times  
 ‘I have made you (SG) cry many times.’ (based on Ortiz de Urbina 2003: 594)
- b. *Arazo hau ikus-erazi d-i-gu-te.*  
 problem this[ABS] see-CAUS TAM-DF-1PL.III-PL  
 ‘They have made us see this problem.’ (Laka 1996, 2.1.5 Ex. 19)

This construction is used with causees that are in S/A function with respect to the non-causative predicate; causees in A<sub>3</sub> function are only marginally accepted (apparently due to the marginal acceptance of two dative- marked arguments in the same clause), and those with T or G causees are clearly ungrammatical.

Even though there are neither canonical passive nor antipassive constructions in the language, some authors have analyzed a number of constructions in these terms in the past. The participial construction illustrated in (24) below is a case in point; a study by the Royal Academy of the Basque Language has called it passive (Euskaltzaindia 2002:17). The perfective participle *hondoratu* ‘sink/sunk’ takes the determiner *-a* and combines with a finite form of the auxiliary *izan* ‘be’ (nonfinite *izan* ‘be’ is optional):

- (37) *Itsasontzi-a hondoratu-a (izan) z-en.*  
 ship-DET[ABS] sink.PFV-DET be TAM-PST  
 ‘The ship was sunk.’

Nevertheless, when an agentive participant is overtly expressed in such a construction, it cannot precede the S NP *itsasontzia* ‘the ship’ and is not indexed on the auxiliary (a)—unlike in the bivalent clause, where both are bona fide core syntactic arguments and the usual constituent order and indexing regularities apply (b):

- (38) a. *Itsasontzi-a ekaitza-k hondoratu-a (izan) z-en.*  
 ship-DET[ABS] storm-ERG sink.PFV-DET be TAM-PST  
 ‘The ship was sunk by the storm.’
- b. *Ekaitza-a-k itsasontzi-a hondoratu d-u.*  
 storm-DET-ERG ship-DET[ABS] sink.PFV TAM-have  
 ‘The storm has sunk the ship.’

Unlike the active bivalent clause (and a canonical passive clause), the participial construction is arguably biclausal, and the agentive participant belongs to the embedded clause (Ortiz de Urbina and Uribe-Etxebarria 1991):

- (39) a. [*Itsasontzia [ekaitza-k hondoratu-a (izan)] zen.*]  
 the.ship storm-ERG sink.PFV-DET be it.was  
 ‘The ship was sunk by the storm.’
- b. [*Loreak [Jon-i Mikel-ek eman-ak (izan)] ziren.*]  
 the.flowers J.-DAT M.-ERG give.PFV-DET.PL be they.were  
 ‘The flowers were given to Jon by Mikel.’

Crucially, arguments in several functions in the embedded clause can be the S of the superordinate one: P and T as in (26) above, but also A as in (27) below; S and A<sub>3</sub> (not shown here) are possible as well; G’s are excluded:

- (40) a. [*Jon [liburu asko irakurri-a] da.*]  
 J. book many read.PFV-DET s/he.is  
 ‘Jon has read many books.’
- b. \* [*Jon [Ane-k liburu asko eman-a] da.*]  
 J. Ane-ERG book many give.PFV-DET s/he.is  
 Intended: ‘Jon has been given many books by Ane.’

## 5. Conclusions

Thirty years ago, Bossong (1984) contributed with his take on Basque to a debate that was just starting to become heated back then, viz. the one around both the empirical basis and the theoretical significance of morphological vs. syntactic ergativity. He characterized the language as showing simple, non-split, ergative morphology and largely neutral syntax; he also found that it is pragmatic, rather than syntactic, considerations that inform the adequate interpretation of the predicate-argument side of constructions and lead to a somewhat higher frequency of accusative patterns in some respects.

Sarasola (1977) had already addressed several of the key issues treated by Bossong (1984), but it is Ortiz de Urbina (1989) that discussed and clarified questions related to ergativity and splits in great detail. The present study —based as it is on both a broader data basis and benefiting from the insights provided by numerous other studies appeared during the last three decades— presents a complex picture. Whereas dependent marking unmistakably show ergative patterns, it also shows other patterns once several verb classes are taken into account. By a similar token, head marking shows several other patterns in addition to ergative ones, not only due to the partition of the lexicon, but also to grammatical (i.e. TAM- and person-based) splits.<sup>19</sup> Syntax is also diverse with respect to grammatical relation considerations, and here several of our findings confirm Bossong’s claim while others actually contradict him. Adverbial clauses, attributive clauses and focusing strategies present no hard constraints on which arguments of the S-A-A<sub>3</sub>-P-T-G pool can be construed as the pivot; future corpus studies more comprehensive than Bossong’s preliminary findings shall substantiate or disprove his claims about relative tendencies here. By contrast, subjects of imperatives, as well as control and raising phenomena, show a clear preference for an S/A/A<sub>3</sub> pivot. These results amount to saying that, yes, Basque syntax does show some “deep accusativity,” but also that the less semantically-oriented areas of its syntax are fairly neutral. In addition, Basque morphology, in particular verbal morphology, is much more complex than usually stated not only with respect to number, kind, and interdependency of marking slots but also regarding their patterning. At least from a purely phenomenological (i.e. theoretically

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<sup>19</sup> Bossong (1984) explains away the person-based split mentioned in Section 2.2 above via a rather intricate diachronic argument and a different analysis of what he sees as *z-*, *Ø-*, and *-Ø* 3rd-person markers found on verbs/auxiliaries. Rather than presenting a detailed and fully justified counter-proposal here, we have limited ourselves to presenting an alternative account that is more in agreement with present-day perspectives on Basque verbal morphology.



agnostic, or perhaps para-theoretical) perspective, there appear to be lexical and grammatical splits, which we have surveyed and presented (and refrained from explaining) here and are likely to intrigue, interest, and occupy scholars for several decades to come.

### Abbreviations

A agent-like argument of bivalent clauses, A<sub>3</sub> agentive argument of trivalent clauses, ABS absolutive, ALL allative, DAT dative, DET determiner, DF dative flag, ERG ergative, FAM familial, G goal-like argument of trivalent clauses, INSTR instrumental, IPFV imperfective, JUSS jussive, n. noun, NFAM nonfamilial, NMLZ nominalizer, P patient-like argument of bivalent clauses, PFV perfective, PL plural, PST past, PTCP participle, S single argument of monovalent clauses, SG singular, SUB subordinate, SUBJ subjunctive T theme-like argument of trivalent clauses, TAM tense-aspect-mood, v. verb

I, II, III verbal inflection sets

$x \rightarrow y$  'x acting on y'

$x \leftrightarrow y$  'x and y interacting'

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