

## PARADIGMATIC REDUNDANCY IN THE COMPLEMENT SYSTEM OF BASQUE

While most languages do not seem to have more than four types of complement clauses (Noonan 2007: 147), in Basque at least seven have to be distinguished. There is, however, a large overlap in the distribution of finite and non-finite types, which raises the question if Basque acquired finite complement clauses as a result of contact with Romance languages.

Basque has been in increasingly intense contact with Romance languages for more than two millennia, but only the last 500 years are documented in texts. Thus most instances of Romance influence cannot be observed directly but have to be inferred.

The Basque inventory of complement types consists of finite indicative and subjunctive clauses, as well as verbal nouns (VN) inflected in different cases and showing different morphosyntactic behaviour, and the infinitive-like perfective participle. Table 1 is a very rough representation of the mapping between types of matrix predicates and types of complement clauses. It shows that finite clauses are not only restricted to two classes of matrix predicates but also generally replaceable with a non-finite alternative without or with only a subtle change in meaning. The only exception to this are some utterance and cognition verbs like *esan* ‘say’ or *pentsatu* ‘think’, for which it is cross-linguistically not uncommon to take only direct speech complements (Dixon 2006: 28). Finite complements in Basque, thus, strictly speaking add nothing to the system besides a syntactically more integrated alternative to direct speech.

utterance, cognition, propositional attitude		manipulation	intention	implicative	immediate perception	phasal	modal
indicative		subjunctive					
	VN in structural case	purposive VN, infinitival interrogative		VN in structural case	inessive VN		infinitive

**Table 1:** Mapping between types of matrix predicates and finite and non-finite types of complement clauses.

This synchronic redundancy suggests that one class of complement clauses intruded into contexts occupied by the other. There are two possibilities:

**Hypothesis A: Finite types spread into contexts occupied by non-finite ones.** Having non-finite rather than finite complement clauses would fit the typological profile of Basque as a head-final language. In fact, OV languages tend to have preverbal complement clauses (Schmidtke-Bode/Diessel 2017: 10) and preverbal complement clauses are more commonly non-finite than finite (ibid.: 12-19). In the Romance contact languages, on the other hand, finite complement clauses are frequently used, and a subjunctive with similar functions as in Romance started to develop in Basque only at the beginning of the writing tradition (Mounole 2014: 328). Finite complementation in general seems, however, to be quite old since it was already well established at the time of the first texts, and the complementisers used are neither borrowed nor calqued from Romance.

**Hypothesis B: Non-finite types spread into contexts occupied by finite ones.** This would mean that the complex polypersonal forms of finite verbs are being replaced by simpler forms, a phenomenon that can also be observed in some other domains, like the potential mood being replaced by analytic constructions with *ahal izan* ‘be able’. While this is a plausible scenario for the subjunctive forms, which are very rarely found in non-embedded clauses and can thus almost completely be dispensed with when substituted by other subordinate forms, the indicative forms are less dispensable since they are still used in independent clauses.

Thus, a combination of both scenarios seems most plausible, namely a spread of finite complement clauses (whether they had developed independently or as a consequence of contact) replicating the Romance model and, probably more recently, a gradual substitution of subjunctive complements by non-finite forms.

## REFERENCES

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