

On *egin*: *do*-support in Basque

This paper discusses *do*-support in Central and Western Basque (CWB) dialects and argues that these varieties, along with Korean, form a class of *do*-support languages whose dummy verb insertion mechanism differs slightly from that in English and Monnese (Pollock 1989, Benincà and Poletto 2004). In all four of these languages, the dummy verb is merged as a last resort strategy to check a strong feature in a position that is, in marked environments, inaccessible to the verb. However, in Korean and CWB, unlike in English and Monnese, the verb's inability to raise is not due to its theta-marking properties, but rather because the VP must be nominalized for independent reasons; as a nominal, the focalized verb cannot check strong verbal features, and a dummy verb is merged instead to do so.

In CWB, *do*-support is triggered in verb focalization constructions such as (1) which Ortiz de Urbina (1989) gives as a felicitous answer to, "What happened to your father?" Evidence from word-order, intonation, extraction from complement clauses and clausal pied-piping suggests that focalized verbs move to the same left-peripheral focus position as other kinds of foci (Rebuschi 1984). In such constructions, the dummy verb (*egin*) bears one of three aspectual markers— perfect $-\emptyset$, imperfect $-t(z)en$ or future $-ko$ —normally realized on the main verb as shown in (2) and (3). These facts suggest that *egin* is inserted to host these aspectual morphemes because the verb cannot, as it normally does in non-focalization environments. A hint about the verb's inability to pick up these morphemes on its way to the left periphery comes from Korean verb focalizations, such as (4), which resemble the Basque data in (1). In Korean, the raised VP is a nominal as evidenced by the obligatory nominalizing suffix $-ki$ (Hagstrom 1995, 1996). The main claim made in this paper is that CWB VPs in verb focalization constructions, as in Korean, are [+noun], and as such, cannot raise to check verbal aspectual features.

In particular, focalized main verbs, which bear one of three affixes, $-tu$, $-i$ or $-\emptyset$, depending on the verb class, are argued to be infinitivals with nominal properties. An approach to these elements as infinitival markers rather than perfective markers, on focalized verbs and verbs under modals is motivated by two facts. First, these elements need not cooccur with a perfective interpretation in these environments, as shown in (2) and (5). Second, while $-tu/-i/-\emptyset$ is realized on the focalized main verb in (2), true perfective markers such as imperfect $-t(z)en$ and future $-ko$ in this example, affix to the dummy verb, *egin*. I follow Cinque (2000) in assuming that these infinitival markers are functional elements of a nominal nature merged low in the functional sequence of the clause, and further, that the VP in CWB, as in Korean, must be [+noun] in order to raise to FocP. Verb focalizations, then, have the structure in (6).

Two kinds of evidence suggest that these infinitivals are nominals. First, from the perspective of the structure in (6), verb focalization constructions closely resemble a class of unergative predicates involving the "light verb" *egin*, as in (7) (Laka 1993, Bobljik 1993). Crucially, light-verb predicates of this kind are not available in *egin*-focalization constructions, as shown in (8). The unavailability of two *egins* is plausibly because the *egins* in these two environments are merged in the same position and are, in fact, of a piece: in both cases, *egin* is merged to host verbal morphology because a nominal element cannot check verbal functional features. A second kind of evidence comes from "restructuring" phenomena with modals. Basque modals fall into two classes in this regard. With, *ahal*, 'can' agreement marking on the auxiliary is exhaustively determined by the argument structure of the lower verb (9). In contrast, *nahi*, 'want' obligatorily takes ergative marking even with unaccusative complements as in (10). This difference is plausibly related to the fact that the latter, but not the former may also take DP complements, like main verbs. I assume that *nahi*-class modals are merged in a higher, functional position, and take a null verbal head in V^0 . Following Wurmbrand (2001), the difference between these two classes of auxiliaries, then, is plausibly explained if *ahal* participates in "functional restructuring" as in (11), while *nahi* is a case of "lexical restructuring," with a "very small (e.g., VP) complement," as in (12). From this perspective, the ergative marking required by *nahi* with unaccusative verbs is explained by the fact that the null main verb takes a nominal complement, namely the infinitival.

This analysis supports current understanding of *do*-support as a last resort strategy triggered by a conspiracy of a strong feature together with some independent constraint on verb raising. Crucially, unlike in English and Monnese, the verb's inability to raise in CWB and Korean is not related to theta-marking, but is rather because the verb must be nominalized in such constructions.

Examples:

- (1) Hil egin da gure aita
die do AUX our father
'Our father has DIED.'
- (2) eror-i (egin-go/egi-ten) da etxea. (verb focalization)
fall-i do.FUT/egin.IMP AUX house
'The house is going to fall.'/'The house falls.'
- (3) etxe-a (eror-tzen/erori-ko) da (non-verb focalization)
house-the fall.IMP/fall.FUT AUX
'The house has fallen down.'/'The house won't fall down.'
- (4) Chelswu-ka chayk-ul ilk-ki-nun ha-ess-ta (Hagstrom 1995)
Chelswu-NOM book-ACC read-ki-top. do-PAST-DECL
'Read the book, Chelswu does.'
- (5) Maiz etorr-i nahi dute
often come-**INFIN** want AUX-3PLE
'They want to come often.' (want>often)
- (6) [[VP] -tu/-i/-Ø]_[+noun] egin
- (7) Jon-ek lo egin-go du
Jon-Erg sleep egin-FUT AUX-Erg
'Jon will sleep.'
- (8) *lo egin egin du
sleep egin egin AUX
'He has SLEPT.'
- (9a) (unaccusative)
Joan ahal naiz
go MOD AUX-1A
'I can go.'
- (9b) (ditransitive)
Jon-i liburua eman ahal diot
Jon-D. book give MOD AUX-3A-3D-1E
'I can give Jon the book.'
- (10) Joan nahi dut
go MOD AUX-1E-1A
'I want to go.'
- (11) [_{FP} ahal ('can')] [_{InfinP} [+noun] -tu/-i/-Ø] [_{VP} main verb] (functional restructuring)
- (12) [_{FP} nahi ('want')] [_{VP} null] [_{InfinP} [+noun] -tu/-i/-Ø] [_{VP} main verb] (lexical restructuring)

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