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ARTICLES

BASQUE RESULTATIVES AND RELATED ISSUES

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Basque has an impressive number of resultative constructions for transitive verbs, not to mention dialectal variants. The purpose of this paper is to classify them according to Nedjalkov's typology and compare Basque resultatives with similar periphrastic constructions in Classical Armenian. On the way, we meet the questions of Basque diatheses, of voice ambiguity of past participles, and of the affinity between possession and resultativity. The paper is based on material available in the literature and discussions with a native speaker or a specialist of the field. It appears that only "mediopassive", a detransitivizing transformation, can be considered a diathesis, whereas the so-called "passive" and "antipassive" are respectively an objective and a subjective resultative. Also LAFITTE'S so-called "par-fait" (1979) is a resultative, possessive in form and rather subjective in meaning. Classical Armenian displays a strikingly similar series of resultatives and the same kind of voice ambiguity for its past participle. It is hypothesized that the voice ambiguity may be related to the existence of a possessive resultative construction.

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INTRODUCTION

NEDJALCOV & JAXONTOV (1988) created an interesting framework for describing resultatives in various languages. Basque is not among the languages which are mentioned in this work though the system of Basque resultatives is particularly rich and well documented. Hopefully this paper can partially fill the gap. In addition, one important kind of resultative construction in Basque is of the possessive type. I felt it interesting to re-visit the relationship between resultativity and possession in the light of Basque and other languages' data. Let me first introduce the terminology and key notions used throughout this paper.

RESULTATIVES

As is well known, among others from NEDJALCOV (1988), the **resultative constructions** express the state resulting from a previous action. This may be the state of the unique argument of an intransitive verb, or of the agent of a transitive verb, in which two cases we call it a **subjective resultative**, or this may be the state of the patient of a transitive verb, and then

we call it an **objective resultative**. There is also a third kind, **possessive resultatives**, based on a possessive predication. We will see later on how this framework applies in Basque, but in this introduction I will stick to examples from NEDJALKOV (1988), slightly adapted if necessary, and requiring minimum glossing or no glossing at all.

Cross-linguistically, there are many ways to build resultatives, but within this paper we focus on constructions using a past participle and an auxiliary. Auxiliary *be* is particularly suited for expressing states, so it is typically used for forming subjective resultatives from intransitive verbs, like in German *die Äpfel sind ganz verfault* “the apples are quite rotten”, but also for expressing objective resultatives from transitive verbs, like in French *le bâton est cassé* “the stick is broken”, in which case it may be difficult to distinguish from a passive form.

But, in order to express resultatives from transitive verbs, many languages can use auxiliary *have* like in *I have my task written*, that is the state I am in after I have written the task, or *j’ai mon devoir d’écrit*, same sense in colloquial French. Even languages which do not possess a verb *have*, but use instead a possession predicate with auxiliary *be*, can use this predicate in resultatives. In colloquial Russian¹, for example, we have *u menja rabota napisana* “I have the task written” (lit. “at-me task written”), which seems to express the relief of the subject, rather than the completion state of the task; on the contrary, in dialectal Russian, *primus u menja potušen* “the primus-stove is turned off (and I did it)” seems to point to the state of the stove (the topic of the sentence), even if the accomplisher is under focus. A formal parallel to this is found in Estonian (LINDSTRÖM & TRAGEL 2010), where the possession predicate is based on auxiliary *be* and the adessive case of the possessor.

Classical Armenian uses a possession predicate where the possessor is in genitive, so we get the resultative form *im tesimal ē zna* “I am in the state of having seen him” (lit. “of-me seen is him”), where the first word *im* is the genitive of 1SG pronoun. Also, the copula is always in third person singular, so it is a kind of impersonal “there is” expression, and the patient is in accusative case. In Latin too, we have the *mihi est* possessive construction, hence *liber mihi lectus est* “the book has been read by me” (lit. “book to-me read is”).

As is already visible from the examples above, the case and agreement patterns show a great diversity with transitive verbs: case of agent and of patient, agreement of the auxiliary, agreement of the past participle etc.

A final point of terminology: In this paper, following MASLOV (1988), adjectives “statal” and “actional” will be applied to “perfect” and “passive” for qualifying them as “resultative” and “non-resultative” respectively.

DIATHESIS AND VOICE

Since resultatives and diatheses are connected issues, I also have to define the latter. Although for the purpose of this article most current definitions of this notion could do, I will sometimes rely more closely on the one by LAZARD (1997: 131). With some simplification and extrapolation on my part, he defines a diathesis as a morphosyntactic construction characterized by a specific voice (which is a verbal morphological category) and by a specific marking pattern of the core syntactic arguments (actants). In addition, changing the diath-

¹ The two following examples are drawn from MASLOV (1988). The second one is adapted.

esis alters the marking of at least one actant and does not change significantly the semantic contents of the utterance.²

In line with that definition, the passive diathesis is the uni-actant construction of a passive voice verb, wherein the unique actant is coreferential with the patient actant of the corresponding active construction, and the agent actant is either deleted or turned into an adverbial.³ The antipassive diathesis is defined symmetrically by changing “passive voice” to “antipassive voice” and by exchanging “agent” and “patient” in the previous definition.

1. THE RESULTATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN BASQUE

1.1. DO VOICES EXIST IN BASQUE?

Whether voice or diatheses exist in Basque has long been a controversial issue. According to a first well-known viewpoint (SCHUCHARDT 1895), all verbs in ergative languages are passive by nature since their arguments behave syntactically as the arguments of passive verbs do in accusative Western languages. The main problem with this viewpoint is that, despite the difficulty to define unanimously what is active or passive, there is one criterion on which scholars generally agree: passive voice usually topicalizes the patient. But in Basque the topic of a typical transitive clause has usually an agent role.

According to MARTINET (1958) and his school – this is a second viewpoint – in ergative languages the verb is not “oriented” towards a particular argument and behaves more or less like an action noun. And according to a third viewpoint, there are true diatheses in Basque and such terms as “mediopassive” (DE RIJK 2008), “passive” and “antipassive” (REBUSCHI 1983) are frequently found in the literature about Basque... We will propose an answer to this question later on.

1.2. THE BASIC NON-RESULTATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

Before proceeding to the resultative constructions in Basque it is necessary to expose the basic non-resultative constructions with which the resultative ones are in contrast. From the viewpoint of tense, these non-resultative constructions express a “recent past”. It is enough here to content oneself with this vague but self-explanatory term and conventionally translate its forms into an English simple past. It seems wise to avoid using for this tense the name “perfect”, which some authors use, and so to avoid confusion with MASLOV’S Janus-faced perfect (1984), both actional and statal. We keep “perfect” to translate Lafitte’s “parfait”, a statal notion according to the Indo-Europeanist tradition.

The basic transitive construction exemplified in (1) uses a past participle (*jan* “eaten”) and a form of auxiliary *have* (*du* “he has it”). As usual in ergative languages, the agent *Kepak* “Peter” displays ergative case, marked by means of morpheme *-k*, and the patient *ogia* “the bread” is in absolutive with null morpheme (the *-a* morpheme is a definition marker similar

² Lazard defines the notion of “diathesis transformation” and not diathesis as such, hence the need for some extrapolation.

³ Instead of “agent” or “patient actant”, Lazard uses symbols X and Y, which more or less correspond to Dixon’s A and O primitives, but without any flavour of “semantic role”.

to a definite article). Since it is a periphrasis with past participle and auxiliary *have*, it could seem to be a resultative construction or an actional perfect, and this is probably true diachronically, but synchronically this is an actional recent past.⁴

- (1) *Kepa-k* *ogi-a* *jan* *du*
 Peter-ERG bread-DEF:ABS eat:PP have:3SGA.3SGE
 ‘Peter ate the bread’

The basic intransitive construction exemplified in (2) has only one argument, in absolutive case. The construction uses a past participle form too (*etorri* “come”), but the auxiliary is a form of verb *be* (*da* “he/she/it is”).

- (2) *Kepa* *etorri* *da*
 Peter-ABS come:PP be:3SGS
 ‘Peter came’

The intransitive construction may be used with transitive verbs too provided the agent is not expressed. This is why the previous transitive construction (1) may be transformed into (3) meaning “the bread was eaten” or “someone ate the bread”. This is a detransitivizing transformation, called **mediopassive** by De Rijk.

- (3) *ogi-a* *jan* *da*
 bread-DEF:ABS eat:PP be:3SGS
 ‘the bread was eaten’

1.3. RESULTATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS: SO-CALLED “PASSIVE”, “ANTIPASSIVE” AND “PERFECT”

Now, we can show the resultative constructions in contrast to the previous three non-resultative ones. For the sake of simplicity, the examples given here are constructed grammatical examples, not examples drawn from a literary corpus. They use the same building blocks as the previous ones: an agent *Kepa* in absolutive, or *Kepak* in ergative; a patient *ogia* “the bread”; an auxiliary verb *du* “he has it” or *da* “he is”. The only difference with non-resultative examples is that the past participles, *etorri* “come” and *jan* “eaten”, now display a final *-a* morpheme, identical to the definite article.⁵

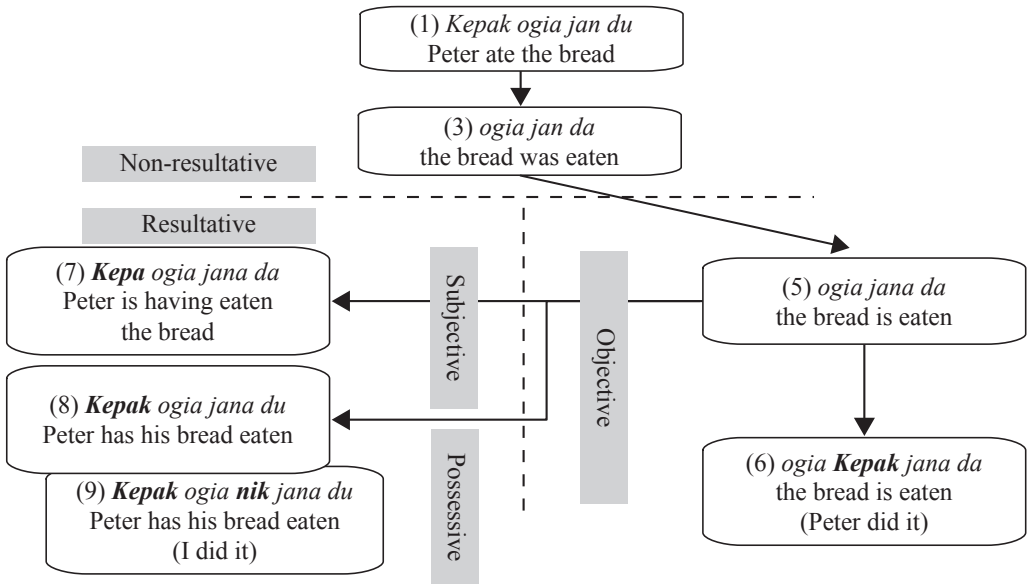
If we take the intransitive recent past example (2) above and add morpheme *-a* to the past participle, we receive (4), an intransitive **perfect** according to LAFITTE’S terminology (1979: 384). The meaning is resultative: “Peter has come (and is here)”, “Peter is in the state of having come”. Despite the possible ambiguity of the term “perfect”, this is a subjective resultative, not an actional perfect, and I will try to enforce this specific resultative reading of the English present perfect by adding “(res.)” in the translations.

⁴ The range of time adverbs compatible with a recent past verb form is limited. It is excluded to say **Kepak atzo ogia jan du* to translate “Peter ate the bread yesterday”. Such a restriction is quite common with a resultative expressing a present state, it is much less common with actional pasts. That reinforces the supposition about a resultative origin of this “recent past”. A term like “hodiernal past” (COMRIE 1985) could also be appropriate.

⁵ As the reader knows Basque has many dialects and not all use this final *-a* in this case: they can use something else, see e.g. HAASE 1992. In addition, some dialects use different auxiliaries, *egon* instead of *izan*, and *eduki* instead of *ukan*, but this can be considered as unimportant details for the purpose of this paper.

- (4) *Kepa etorri-a da*
 Peter:ABS come:PP-DEF:ABS be:3SGS
 ‘Peter has come’ (res.)

Intransitive verbs have only one resultative form, but transitive verbs can accommodate up to four. A helpful way to introduce them is by referencing the figure below where we meet up again with the typical transitive clause (1) and its detransitivized form (3), in the non-resultative domain so far.



Now we can proceed to the resultative domain and get the result of (3): the bread was eaten and now the bread is eaten yet (5). This is an objective resultative which we could call the **mediopassive perfect**. The term **short passive** is also used (“short” because non-agentive).

- (5) *ogi-a jan-a da*
 bread-DEF:ABS eat:PP-DEF:ABS be:3SGS
 ‘the bread is eaten’ (res.)

If we want to reintroduce Peter in this situation, there are three ways to do it. First we can simply expand (5) by adding the agentive noun phrase *Kepak* and get what is called the **(long) passive** form (6) (ORTIZ DE URBINA & URBIE-ETXEBARRIA 1991). It is still an objective resultative. Notice the translation “the bread is eaten and Peter did it” to avoid saying “the bread is eaten by Peter” because in English – and the same obtains in French – the presence of an agentive noun phrase may induce an interpretation as an actional passive “the bread is being eaten by Peter”, but in Basque we really have a resultative here (TRASK 1985: 988). Contrary to what happens in several languages it is possible in Basque to express the agent of the action which led to the result we are talking about. Note also that introducing an agent in the non-resultative mediopassive form (3) above is impossible, it is possible only in the resultative domain.

- (6) *ogi-a* *Kepa-k* *jan-a* *da*
 bread-DEF:ABS Peter-ERG eat:PP-DEF:ABS be:3SGS
 ‘the bread is eaten and Peter did it’

But a second way to reintroduce the agent could be by reversing the perspective, and by generating a subjective resultative. Then we get what is called the **antipassive** form (7) meaning “Peter is in the state of having eaten the bread”. If the patient is not expressed, we receive what is called a **short antipassive**. Here both the agent and the patient are in absolutive case, which does not fit well with the usual “antipassive” pattern. A term like “bi-absolutive” could be better suited.

- (7) *Kepa* *ogi-a* *jan-a* *da*
 Peter:ABS bread-DEF:ABS eat:PP-DEF:ABS be:3SGS
 ‘Peter has eaten the bread’ (res.)

There is a third way to reintroduce Peter, *viz.* by designating him as the experiencer of the state resulting from someone’s action. Peter is implicated in this state, he somehow owns the result of the action, and this is emphasized by the use of auxiliary *have*. So we receive the transitive **perfect** (8) meaning “Peter has his bread eaten (by himself or by someone unspecified)”. Formally, this is a possessive resultative, but if the bread has been eaten by Peter, I contend this is also a subjective resultative since the experiencer of the resulting state is also the agent of the action which led to this state.

- (8) *Kepa-k* *ogi-a* *jan-a* *du*
 Peter-ERG bread-DEF:ABS eat:PP-DEF:ABS have:3SGA.3SGE
 ‘Peter has the bread eaten’

And we can also expand the sentence by mentioning the agent in case Peter’s bread has been eaten, not by him but – say – by “me”, and we receive (9). Here we have a bi-ergative clause, and we will have to explain later this apparently strange phenomenon. Notice that we cannot consider it a subjective resultative any more since the experiencer of the state is not the agent of the transitive action.

- (9) *Kepa-k* *ogi-a* *ni-k* *jan-a* *du*
 Peter-ERG bread-DEF:ABS 1SG-ERG eat:PP-DEF:ABS have:3SGA.3SGE
 ‘Peter has his bread eaten and I did it’

A native speaker may feel the example above too fabricated but, obviously, similar occurrences may be found in literary works, like (10) cited by DE RIJK (2008: 678). Here the experiencer is 1SG, which appears only as a bound morpheme in the auxiliary, and the agent is *zure aita-k*. So we are still in a bi-ergative construction though the “first” one is not expressed by a noun phrase.

- (10) *hau* *zure aita-k* *eman-a* *du-t*
 DEM:ABS your father-ERG give:PP-DEF:ABS have:3SGA-1SGE
 ‘I have this given by your father’

1.4. BI-CLAUSAL ANALYSIS

In order to expose the data more in depth we will see how the past participle behaves with respect to agreement. So instead of *ogia* “the bread” we will use *sagarrak* “apples”. Since the plural morpheme *-k* is a homonym of the ergative marker *-k*, for the purpose of clarification a capital *-K* will be used for the plural marker.

If we apply that to the transitive perfect (8), we receive (11): the form of auxiliary *have* becomes *ditu* “he-has-them” because it agrees also with the patient; and the participle too agrees with the patient similarly to what obtains in French or Spanish: e.g. *Pedro tiene la-s manzana-s comida-s*.

- (11) *Kepa-k* *sagarr-a-K* *jan-a-K* *ditu*
 Peter-ERG apple-DEF-ABS.PL eat:PP-DEF-ABS.PL have:3PLA.3SGE
 ‘Peter has the apples eaten’

If we apply that to the passive (6), we receive (12) with the same agreement pattern as in a French or Spanish passive, i.e. copula and participle in plural.

- (12) *sagarr-a-K* *Kepa-k* *jan-a-K* *dira*
 apple-DEF-ABS.PL Peter-ERG eat:PP-DEF-ABS.PL be:3PLS
 ‘the apples are eaten and Peter did it’

The antipassive, though, behaves quite differently. Applying the same transformation to (7) we receive (13) and find out that nothing agrees in plural: the auxiliary and the participle agree with *Kepa* only.

- (13) *Kepa* *sagarr-a-K* *jan-a* *da*
 Peter:ABS apple-DEF-ABS.PL eat:PP-DEF:ABS be:3SGS
 Peter has eaten the apples (res.)

The reason why the definite article plays such an important role in the resultative constructions seems worth investigating. One good clue is provided by the fact that this definition marker is also (nearly) mandatory for all adjectives in a predicative⁶ function: *ogia on-a da*, lit. “the-bread the-good it-is”, “the bread is good”, *sagarr-ak on-ak dira*, lit. “the-apples the-good-s they-are”, “the apples are good”. The same obtains with an object predicative: *begi-ak ederr-ak dituzu*, lit. “the-eyes the-beautiful-s you-have-them”, “your eyes are beautiful”.

Another peculiarity of some resultative constructions is their lack of word order flexibility. Usually the constituent order is free, but in passive the agent must precede the participle, and in antipassive the patient must precede the participle. This is particularly visible by the contrast between the “passive” construction (6) with its fixed word order which is contrary to the usual word order of (1).

Putting together the agreement patterns, the adjectival nature of the participle, its predicative function, and the peculiarities of word order, it can be easily concluded that the agent *Kepak* in the passive construction (6) is not governed directly by a hypothetical verb form *jana da* to be considered as the passive form of the verb form *jan du*. And in an exactly symmetric way, the patient *ogia* in the antipassive construction (7) is not governed

⁶ Subject or object predicatives are also known as subject or object “complements” in English terminology (in French: “attribut du sujet” or “de l’objet”).

by a hypothetical antipassive form *jana da...* identical to the passive form. A much more realistic analysis is that *Kepak* in the passive construction, and *ogia* in the antipassive one, are dependants of the sole participle. The participle forms a participial clause. The matrix clause revolves around the sole copula and the function of the participial clause is predicative: how is the bread? The bread is having-been-eaten-by-Peter, or “Peter-eaten”; how is Peter? Peter is having-eaten the-bread. But here we notice that the same participle *jana* has both a passive and an active interpretation. This bi-clausal interpretation is not novel: it appears already in TRASK (1981) where earlier work by Brettschneider and Wilbur is mentioned.

The same bi-clausal analysis is true also for perfect. This is quite obvious with our two examples of intransitive perfect, (4) and (5), but it is also the case with the transitive perfect (8) where the participial clause consists of the sole participle and functions as a predicative with respect to the object *ogia*. We can expand this participial clause by mentioning the agent, as in (9), and the bi-clausal explanation makes it clear why there are two ergatives here, as well as why there are two absolutes in the antipassive construction (7): in both cases there are two clauses.

1.5. AGAIN ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF VOICES IN BASQUE

In my opinion there are good reasons for considering the mediopassive construction as a diathesis. This is a simple transformation of the active construction whereby the patient is topicalized and the agent is discarded. The tense-aspect value is preserved. So this is typically the kind of non-agentive passive which can be found in other languages like Arabic. The reluctance to name it simply “passive” stems from the traditional use of this same word for a different notion.

The tense-aspect value is *not* preserved in the so-called passive and antipassive constructions whereby a recent past action is turned into a present state. In my opinion this is enough to deny to those two constructions the status of diathesis since a modification of the tense-aspect value may hardly be considered preserving the semantic contents.⁷ One reason for the erroneous classification of the so-called passive form as a voice similar to the passives of French or Spanish lies probably in the case of non-terminative verbs like *maitatu* “to love” because the present result of a past non-terminative action is quite similar to a real actional passive: *maitatua da* “someone has undertaken a love relation with him” and, as a result, “he is being loved”. Another reason for the confusion lies probably in the influence of French grammarians: French uses the same periphrasis for actional passive and objective resultative, except that the French resultative usually prohibits expression of the agent. The presence of an agent phrase is thus a clue that the ambiguous form must be interpreted passively. But in Basque objective resultatives may have an agent expressed and that may have influenced French grammarians.

⁷ Throughout his work LAZARD treats the Basque passive and antipassive as diatheses, but he admits (1986: 6) that they are restricted to the resultative aspect. According to this view the passive and antipassive constructions should not be matched with recent past, but with the perfect construction. Though there are other arguments why his standpoint can be refuted (absence of distinct verb forms, violation of semantic invariance), the general idea that diatheses can exist independently in the resultative domain may cause confusion if we apply it to languages which possess both resultatives and a more widely usable voice system.

As for the so-called antipassive construction, there are additional reasons why it should not be equated to the antipassive voice of a language like Dyrbal: despite some similarities, e.g. the topicalization of the agent turned into an intransitive subject, and the possible demotion of the patient, there is no distinctive voice marking on the verb and no agent-patient differentiation.⁸

The semantic invariance is also highly questionable: can we really assert that (6) and (7) are paraphrastic pairs? They indeed express the states of two entities which were formerly involved in a common action, but the states expressed are different: the state of the eaten bread can hardly compare with the state of the person who ate it.

The passive, antipassive and perfect constructions are not diatheses. They are resultatives and structurally they are bi-clausal, which makes any question about their voice irrelevant.

2. COMPARING BASQUE WITH CLASSICAL ARMENIAN⁹

2.1. PARALLELS IN RESULTATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

The already mentioned construction (14) is a periphrastic perfect, in fact a resultative, which uses a possession predication with a past participle to be interpreted passively. Structurally, it compares roughly with the transitive perfect construction (8) of Basque, which also uses a possession predication, and it has a typical meaning of subjective resultative¹⁰: “I am in the state of having seen him”.

- (14) *im tes-eal ē z-na*
 1SG:GEN see-PP be:PRES.3SG ACC-3SG
 ‘I have seen him’ (res.)

It is worth noting here that the genitive agent may be missing, in which case the meaning is impersonal. As the agent has disappeared, it cannot be a subjective resultative any more, and in fact it is an objective resultative quite similar in meaning to the Basque medio-passive perfect exemplified in (5).

⁸ Agent-patient differentiation is not required by our definition of diathesis: a marking modification of one actant is enough and, indeed, the agent noun phrase undergoes such a modification. But in the more prototypical antipassives of Dyrbal or Chukchi the demoted patient receives an oblique case.

⁹ I would like to thank Dr. Daniel Kölligan for his advice and for checking the Armenian material of this section.

¹⁰ LYONNET (1933: 74–77) makes it clear that this periphrastic construction took up the meaning of the disappeared Indo-European synthetic perfect. At the time when the Gospels were written, the Greek perfect had broadened the originally resultative meaning of the IE (statal) perfect towards taxis, but the Armenian translator renders it accurately by an Armenian perfect or by an aorist (actional perfect) depending on the meaning. In the Gospels, the Armenian perfect is mostly a subjective resultative (“le parfait désigne l’état du sujet”), except for some pluperfects which can be interpreted as “état de l’objet”. Rather surprisingly LYONNET (1933: 93) finds in Eznik a great number of “parfaits-objet” like the one which he translates as “car le créateur a placé la crainte et la peur de l’homme dans les bêtes féroces”, and glosses as “cette crainte s’y trouve actuellement pour y avoir été placée” to justify his objective resultative interpretation. Indeed, it may seem strange to speak about the Creator’s state, but if we focus on the action itself it is arguable whether the relative clause expresses exclusively the “state” of the fear. If this is really the case, then one has to wonder why this clause is not expressed in passive, which would be an unquestionable objective resultative. This is why I would not feel comfortable to consider all such “parfaits-objet” as objective resultatives in our modern sense.

- (15) *tes-eal* *ē* *z-na*
 see-PP be:PRES.3SG ACC-3SG
 ‘one has seen him’ (res.), ‘he is seen’ (res.)

Still using the passive value of participle *teseal*, as in (14), we could say *na teseal ē yinēn* (16), a so-called passive perfect, which is in fact an objective resultative similar to the passive construction of Basque. Like in Basque it allows expressing the agent too.

- (16) *na* *tes-eal* *ē* *y-inēn*
 3SG see-PP be:PRES.3SG from-1SG:ABL
 ‘he is seen and I did it’

For a more literary example of an agentive resultative one could mention (17) taken from Eznik (LYONNET 1933: 60):

- (17) *y-Astuc-oy* *tu-eal* *en* *i* *darman*
 from-God-ABL.SG give-PP be:PRES.3PL in food:LOC.SG
 ‘they are given as food and God did it’

And in a somewhat more recent stage of the language, the possessive construction (14) becomes superseded by (18), lit. “I having-seen am him”, “I am in the state of having seen him”, a subjective resultative, which gives an active meaning to the participle, similar to what happens with the Basque antipassive construction.

- (18) *es* *tes-eal* *em* *z-na*
 1SG:NOM see-PP be:PRES.1SG ACC-3SG
 ‘I have seen him’ (res.)

2.2. DIFFERENCES

We just put forward the similarities between three different forms of (statal) perfect in Classical Armenian, on one side, and the Basque “perfect”, “passive” and “antipassive” resultative constructions on the other, but it would be fair to emphasize the differences too. One important difference is that Classical Armenian, as most accusative languages, has two constructions for expressing the agent: one for active clauses (nominative) and one for passive clauses (*i* + ablative), whereas Basque uses ergative only¹¹.

In that respect, an important difference lies in the way an agent can be reintroduced into an impersonal resultative: in Basque we can add an agent to the mediopassive perfect (5) and receive the passive construction (6) without changing the structure of the clause, which remains an objective resultative; but in Classical Armenian if we add the agent to (15) without changing the structure, we receive (14), a subjective resultative, and if we want to keep the construction’s resultativity type we are forced to change its structure and receive (16).

Also, the participle is invariable in Classical Armenian, there is no such undifferentiated agent-patient marking in (18) as in the Basque bi-absolutive antipassive, and there is probably no equivalent to the Basque bi-ergative (9). For all those reasons the bi-clausal analysis does not fit properly the Armenian data.

¹¹ At least in Standard Basque. Non-ergative marking of the agent noun phrase is attested for the passive construction in some dialectal areas.

3. VOICE AMBIGUITY

3.1. OF THE PAST PARTICIPLE

Voice ambiguity in Classical Armenian is a wide phenomenon, since many of its paradigms may be interpreted indifferently as active or as actional passive, but its expression in resultative constructions like (16) vs (18) is particularly salient and strikingly similar to what we saw in Basque.

In Basque, as well as in the surrounding Indo-European languages, the past participle of a transitive verb is usually passive. However there are some rare examples of active value for such a past participle, even in attributive function, like this one: *O Jainko hoinbertze mirakulu egina!* (LAFITTE 1979: 226), where the definite past participle *egin-a* lit. “the done” means here “having done”: “O God who has done so many miracles!”.

The same happens in Spanish with a limited number of past participles like *comido*, *bebido*, *leído*, and also in English with *drunk*, or in telegraphic style French where the past participle is used instead of the complete periphrastic perfect, e.g. *perdu veste noire* “lost black jacket”, with *perdu* acting as a contraction of the transitive active form *j’ai perdu*.

As one can imagine, voice ambiguity is acceptable as long as disambiguation is possible, but this is not always the case. As shown by BENVENISTE (1960: 202), the Classical Armenian clause taken from the Bible *or ēr p`oreal i vimē* seems to mean a quite straightforward “which was carved in stone” but, depending on the text versions, we have *or* or *z-or* at the beginning, and *z-or* is the accusative form of the relative pronoun. In order to understand why we get an accusative here, we only need to interpret *ēr p`oreal* actively (“someone had carved”) with an impersonal meaning, as in (15). So here the passive or active interpretation is triggered only by the accusative preposition *z-*. By chance both interpretations converge here. But this is not the case in a clause like *oroc` tueal ēr z-arcāt`n* “of-who-PL given was ACC:DEF-money”, where we can interpret the genitive relative *oroc`* like the agent (“who had given the money”) or like a recipient, because genitive and dative share the same form here: “to whom the money was given”, a quite different meaning.

In Basque too, disambiguation is not always possible: An antipassive without a patient is impossible to distinguish from a passive without an agent, though the orientation is opposite, so *Kepa jana da* may mean “Peter is in the state of having eaten” (antipassive) or “Peter is having been eaten” (passive).

3.2. POSSIBLE CAUSES

In his study about passive participles, HASPELMATH (1994: 154) mentions languages where participles are contextually oriented, like Lezgian: depending on the context, a single participial form can be oriented toward the agent, the patient or even a peripheral participant. I would rather interpret those participles as verb forms with a relativizing suffix bearing no information about the syntactic function of the “nominal gap” in the relative clause: a situation rather similar to what obtains in Basque with the relativizer *-n*. In that language, the relative clause *eman dion* may mean “who gave it to him”, “which he gave to him” or “to whom he gave it” (DE RIJK 2008: 473). According to Dorota Krajewska (personal communication) the same contextual orientation obtains with past participles alone: *neskak idatzi*

gutuna “the letter written by the girl”, *gutuna idatzi neska* “the girl who wrote the letter”.¹² It is however arguable if in those examples the past participles are attributive adjectives or if, along with their dependant, they form a bare participial relative clause (DE RIJK 2008: 491), in which case we would be referred back to the previous situation.

I suspect that another cause may influence the voice ambiguity of transitive past participles, *viz.* the existence of a subjective resultative with auxiliary *have*, which often evolves towards an active actional perfect. The participle then tends to act as the contraction of the plain periphrasis (as in the above mentioned French *perdu veste noire*), or of a free relative clause, and tends to assume its orientation. On the basis of the recent past *etorri da*, in Basque, we can form the free relative clause *etorri den-a* “the one who came”, and equate it to the definite participle *etorria* which is used in resultative forms: *Kepa etorria da = Kepa [etorri dena] da*¹³. Similarly, it is possible that the meaning of free relative *jan duen-a* “the one who ate it” may have contaminated the predicative participle *jana*, which would explain its active meaning in the antipassive construction: *Kepa ogia jana da = Kepa [ogia jan duena] da*.

The form identity of past participles among transitive and intransitive verbs, in the above considered languages, plays probably a role too.¹⁴ Speakers of Esperanto with a good command of the language could hardly say *manĝ-it-a* “eaten”, passive past participle, instead of *manĝ-int-a* “having eaten”, an active past participle with the same *-int* morpheme that is used with intransitive verbs. The same would obtain in a Slavic language like Russian, where participles are inherently oriented.¹⁵ However the inherent orientation of Esperanto participles does not prevent speakers with poorer command to produce ungrammatical utterances like **perd-it-a nigra-n vesto-n*, a straightforward equivalent of telegraphic style French *perdu veste noire*, where despite the passive morpheme *-it*, the intended active meaning of the participle *perdita* is revealed by the accusative form of the lost object.

¹² However, my (Southern) native Basque informant confessed some difficulties in understanding the last example, which mandates an active meaning for *idatzi*. He considers that the plain relative *gutuna idatzi duen neska* would be a much more usual and correct way of expressing that.

¹³ This “equation” may suffer some weakness regarding the word order of the right side. It is however in close parallel to DE RIJK’s assertion (2008: 483) that *on-a*, meaning “the good one/thing”, may be equated with *ona den-a* (or *ona den hura*).

¹⁴ The examples we chose in Basque for transitive (*jan*) and intransitive (*etorri*) verbs do not make quite clear the form identity. In fact, the Basque past participle may be marked by various morphemes (*-Ø*, *-n*, *-i*, *-tu...*) each of which can be used indifferently with transitive or intransitive verbs.

¹⁵ This is an occasion to somehow mitigate an assertion by HASPELMATH (1994: 155) according to whom, in his attempt to “improve” the “imperfect” participle systems of natural languages, “Zamenhof [...] made Esperanto a rather unnatural language”. The active vs passive opposition among present and past participles of Esperanto is attested e.g. in Russian, and among future tense participles, in Latin. As Russian does, Esperanto lacks the form identity of the passive past transitive and active intransitive participles exemplified in many languages (HASPELMATH 1994: 157), but not all languages. This is also the case in Latin and early Germanic languages, where past participles of intransitive verbs are hardly attested, except for deponent verbs, or for expressing impersonal meaning with some verbs: there is, for example, no Latin participle **casus* to translate the “natural” English participle *fallen* in *fallen leaf*. Among the languages of the world there exist many different participle systems: symmetric as well as asymmetric, inherently oriented as well as contextually oriented. What Zamenhof did is simply systematize the model of Russian and Latin. The striking symmetry of the corresponding morpheme system is apparent only, as there exist no “tense morphemes” (*-a*, *-i*, *-o*), nor “voice morphemes” (*-n*, *-Ø*), contrary to what Haspelmath implies. If he means that the resulting system, especially because of its morphological aspect, is not attested in any other language, he is probably right, but uniqueness of features is rather common among languages.

3.3. VOICE INDETERMINACY OF OLD PERSIAN PERFECT

Voice ambiguity is not restricted to the past participle. Sometimes it is impossible to determine the voice of a participial construction even when the past participle in it is unambiguously passive. Similar to Classical Armenian, Old Persian had a periphrastic perfect too, which has been much debated: *tya manā kartam* “which of-me done”, “which I have done”, a possession predicate where the agent appears in genitive-dative (but the patient is in nominative). Contrary to Classical Armenian, the resultative meaning of the Old Persian perfect seems quite eroded. The core of the debate was if the perfect should be interpreted passively, *quod a me factum est*, or actively i.e. *quod habeo factum*. Benveniste was in favour of the active interpretation, but many scholars, like CARDONA (1970), considered genitive to be a quite suitable agentive case in Old Iranian, as it is in old Indo-Aryan. PIREJKO (1968) too was convinced that the perfect was still passive in Old Iranian and evolved towards an active past with ergative alignment later, probably during the undocumented transition period between Old and Middle Iranian. In an article (BAYANT forthc.), I review a dozen of approaches which could possibly lead to a conclusion about the voice of this turn, and I show that none of them gives a really convincing result.

4. BROADER ABOUT POSSESSIVE RESULTATIVES IN VARIOUS LANGUAGES

4.1. ATTRITION AND RECREATION

Let us have a broader look at periphrases with auxiliary verb *have*. We just saw their use in resultative turns, but they are also used for expressing actional perfect, and even mere preterite tense. This kind of “attrition path” from resultative to actional perfect and preterite is very common among languages and has been exposed, among others, by MEILLET (1909) and VENDRYES (1937) for Indo-European. It happens also with resultatives which are not formed with auxiliary *have*, e.g. the synthetic Indo-European perfect has widely disappeared as a resultative and has been replaced in that function by a periphrasis, often a periphrasis based on a possession predicate... which closes the evolution loop. This was the case for example in Hittite, Armenian and Old Persian.

In Basque we saw that the recent past forms are periphrases with *be* or *have*, probable remnants of older resultatives, and that the modern resultative forms differ from the recent past forms only by small variations of the participle form and of the word order emphasizing the predicative function of the participle.

We saw in Basque the number agreement of the participle with the patient in resultative constructions. This agreement pattern is specific to resultative and does not show in the recent past turns. We have something similar in Spanish: *las tengo comidas* (resultative) “I have them eaten” vs *las he comido* (actional perfect) “I have eaten them”. Disappearance of participle-patient agreement is often a sign of grammaticalization of the resultative turn into an actional perfect. In Hittite too (BENVENISTE 1962: 41-65), the participle which goes into the periphrastic (statal) perfect has a clear predicative function, but it is marked by a neutral-adverbial form impeding agreement.

It is also striking how those resultative periphrases seem to percolate in different languages in a same area. VENDRYES (1937) mentions suspicion of influence from Greek to Latin, from Latin to Germanic, from French to Breton... But he admits the form similarity of the Breton

resultative with that of Old Persian is neither genetic, nor areal: It is probably the effect of a universal which mandates the recreation of a resultative on the basis of a possession predication.

4.2. AFFINITY BETWEEN POSSESSION AND RESULTATIVITY

What are the semantic bases of the affinity between possession and resultativity? First it is worth noticing that the auxiliary verbs *have* usually derive from an older meaning like “to hold”, “to keep”, “to take”. This is the case for Latin *habeo*, Germanic **habjan*, Hittite *ḫark-*, and Slavic *iměti*.

When we *have* the task done, what do we possess in reality? Is it the task? It can be the case, especially if we say that we have *our* task done, but most importantly we are now “owners” of the completion state of the action. Moreover, the verb *have*, or equivalent possession predicates, are often used to express affective involvement of the subject. We find this kind of involvement in the so-called “exterior possession construction” (KÖNIG & HASPELMATH 1998) where the possessor seemingly pops out of the constituent it belongs to and becomes a constituent of its own. For example, in German, *ihm sind die Hände gebunden*, “to-him are the hands tied”, that is “his hands are tied”. We could translate this German example into French, word by word: *les mains lui sont liées*. It would be very literary and in normal French, one would rather use the possession predicate: *il a les mains (de) liées*, lit. “he has the hands tied”. This construction is not limited to participles: we can say *il a une fille (de) malade*, lit. “he has a daughter ill” to express the fact that a daughter of his is ill, but in a way which emphasizes that he is the owner of the situation, that this situation involves his personal sphere and has an impact on him: were he dead, we could not use such a sentence except metaphorically.

A further illustration of the implicational value of verb *have* is given by Basque: the sentence *arinoa haurrek edana da*, a passively constructed expression meaning lit. “the-wine by-the-children drunk is”, can be transformed in order to mean that this situation has an impact on us, or on “you”, by saying *arinoa haurrek edana dugu* (REBUSCHI 1983: 549), lit. “the-wine by-the-children drunk we-have-it”, or *duzu*, lit. “you have-it”. Rebuschi names this “transformation implicative”, but it is exactly the same structure as the bi-ergative transitive perfect of example (9), except that here the experiencer of the state is set to “you” or “we”, which is a way to implicate the interlocutor in the experience. It is worth noticing that this very construction suffers an ambiguous meaning: according to my native Basque informant, the previous sentence may also be interpreted as “we, the children, have the wine drunk”, whereby the experiencer and the agent are equated. This interpretation is even the only possible one if instead of *haurrek* one uses the form *haurrok* with a so-called “inclusive article” (DE RIJK 2008: 501).

4.3. RESULTATIVE AND CAUSATIVE

Possession is often used to express causation too, e.g. in English, and this can lead to an overlapping of causative and resultative constructions: *I have my task written* may mean “I am in the state where the task is finished (whoever wrote it)” or “At my request someone writes the task for me”. It is also worth noticing that the resultative *I have my task written* may describe the state resulting from several different actions: not only *I wrote my task*, but also *someone wrote my task*, and *I had my task written* (past causative). The first action may

be understood as a special case of causative (I had me write my task) and the main difference between the last two actions is the degree of control over the effective agent: The control is explicit in the latter, only possible in the former.

In early Romance, perfect with auxiliary *have* has been used with intransitive verbs to convey a causative meaning (KURYŁOWICZ 1931): Old French *mort as mun filz* “you have killed my son”, lit. “you have my son dead”, “you have made him dead”. In Basque it is sometimes enough to use an intransitive verb with auxiliary *have* to produce the same result: *uretan sartu zen* “it went into the water”, *uretan sartu zuen* “he put it into the water” (i.e. “he had it go into the water”). Similarly, in the resultative domain, let us consider the effect of using the intransitive *apurtua da* “it is broken”¹⁶ with auxiliary *have*: *apurtua dut* “I have it broken” and this can be interpreted as the result of me causing it to be broken, except when the breaking action happens completely outside my control.

I believe we do not need to have recourse to lability to account for this behaviour. I rather suspect that auxiliary *have* plays an important role here just because in a typical possessive resultative construction it mandates a passive interpretation of the past participle. If the verb is intransitive, its past participle cannot be passive: that is probably the reason why causativity surfaces in the above examples, viz. to enable the passivization required by the possessive resultative. Applying causativity to an intransitive verb produces a transitive verb, and conversely, we can often (not always) interpret a transitive verb as the causative of its passive (*I am eating bread* = *I am causing bread to be eaten by me*).

Without going too deep into the theoretical side of the question, it looks as if there exists in the past participle a kind of “causation trait” which can be suppressed or activated. Causation is activated when an intransitive past participle is combined with auxiliary *have*. It is usually suppressed when a transitive past participle is combined with auxiliary *be*, like in the Basque “passive” forms (4) and (6), yielding a passive value, but in the “antipassive” (7), where the subject is semantically unlikely to be a patient, causation remains and thus the past participle has an active meaning. I think it is valuable to explain both phenomena by the same activation of causation to get round an impossibility, either for an intransitive verb to be passivized, or for an argument to be the subject of a passive verb. That very explanation is probably more general than the one we sketched for Basque in section 3.2, based on the contraction of a free relative clause, but the two explanations are not mutually exclusive.

ABBREVIATIONS

1 – 1st person, 2 – 2nd person, 3 – 3rd person, A – reference to the absolutive argument, ABL – ablative, ABS – absolutive, ACC – accusative, DAT – dative, DEF – definite article, DEM – demonstrative, E – reference to the ergative argument, ERG – ergative, GEN – genitive, IE – Indo-European, lit. – literally, PL – plural, PP – past participle, PRES – present, S – reference to the single argument, SG – singular

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¹⁶ More precisely, *apurtu* “break” is indeed transitive, but in this kind of objective resultative construction it is impossible to distinguish it from an intransitive verb meaning “to be broken”.

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