

Toward the Goal, up to the Limit. The encoding of endpoints of motion in Basque

This paper addresses the encoding of the entity to/toward which motion evolves, i.e., the semantic role labeled as Goal by many functionalist authors — Direction by some others (Haspelmath 2003; Luraghi 2010). In recent years, the Goal of motion attracted attention from many scholars, especially in research on the Source-Goal asymmetry (Kopecka, Anetta & Vuillermet 2021). However, literature often neglects specific types of Goal encoded by specialized allatives such as the DIRECTIONAL, the APPROXIMATIVE, or the TERMINATIVE — the latter found, among others, in Estonian (Anhava 2010), Arhuaco [Chibchan] (Frank 1990), and some East Caucasian languages like Archi (Kibrik *et al.* 1977: 60).

The Basque case paradigm illustrates the grammaticalization of specialized allative markers resulting from agglutination. In addition to the general ALLATIVE (1), Basque has DIRECTIONAL (2), TERMINATIVE (3), and DESTINATIVE (4) cases. These secondary allatives are morphologically complex and show remarkable dialectal variation. Moreover, directional and approximative meanings also involve several constructions with spatial nouns. FIGURE 1 synthesizes the encoding of spatial relations within the Basque case system.

- (1) *Mundu oste handi bat ethorri-a zen Jerusalem-e-rat.* (Northern, 1777)
people multitude big one come-RES AUX Jerusalem-EPENT-ALL
'A great multitude had come to Jerusalem.'
- (2) *Zesarea inguru-ko auzo-eta-rantz abia-tu zen Jesus.* (Central, 2004)
Caesarea around-REL quartier-PL-DIR depart-PFV AUX Jesus
'Jesus departed toward the quarters surrounding Caesarea.'
- (3) *Oi etse-gino lagun deizut.* (Western, 1567)
Oh home-TERM accompany AUX
'Oh, I've accompanied you up to home.'
- (4) *Bena nuratko da ene arima?* (North-Eastern, 1852)
but where.DEST is my soul.DET
'But where is my soul for/to?'

| Location | Source | Path | Goal |
|----------|----------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| LOCATIVE | ABLATIVE | ABLATIVE PERLATIVE (†) | ALLATIVE LOCATIVE (certain predicates) DIRECTIONAL (Direction) TERMINATIVE (Limit) |

FIGURE 1. Spatial relations and their grammatical markers in Basque

Here some questions arise: a) how do Basque dialects differ in encoding the Goal and its nuances? b) how did this encoding evolve? To answer these and other questions, we studied the encoding of different types of Goal through the textual history of Basque, the markers involved, the polysemy of these markers, and the behavior of predicates. We conducted quantitative analysis over ca. 7,000 uses in a corpus representative of all dialects and periods.

Preliminary results suggest stability in the encoding of Goal. Against initial expectations, the frequency of use of specialized allatives did not undergo a significant increase over the last centuries. Interestingly, most of the observable changes concern the expression of directional values, with the erosion of a specific marker in northern dialects and the subsequent emergence of new postpositional constructions. Beyond Basque, this study points to more general questions: a) which nuances of Goal are more likely to be grammaticalized? b) how (non)-obligatory are specialized allative markers? c) what is their status in a case system?

References

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