

**AN OVERVIEW OF BASQUE LOCATIONAL CASES: OLD DESCRIPTIONS, NEW  
APPROACHES**

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# AN OVERVIEW OF BASQUE LOCATIONAL CASES: OLD DESCRIPTIONS, NEW APPROACHES\*

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Basque, a language isolate spoken on both sides at the western end of the Pyrenees, has very rich lexical and grammatical resources for expressing space. There are five different locational cases and over thirty postpositions, also inflected with these cases, that allow fine and detailed descriptions of space. Traditional accounts on locational cases are good sources for descriptive as well as etymological information. However, when it comes to the explanation and understanding of the conceptualisation of space and motion in Basque, these studies do not offer any insights. In this paper, I present a critical overview of the semantic descriptions provided by these traditional accounts. Section 1 gives a brief tour of the Basque case system. Section 2 discusses those characteristics particular to locational cases. Section 3 describes the main five locational cases in more detail. Section 4 points out areas for further research, areas that posit problems for traditional accounts and possible ways to solve them. Section 5 briefly outlines the main spatial postpositions and some of their special characteristics. The main goal of this paper is to provide a useful background on Basque locational cases for future studies on the conceptual system of space and motion in this language.

## 1. BASQUE AND ITS CASE SYSTEM

There is no total agreement on the number of cases that Basque has –from thirteen to seventeen. A discussion of the appropriateness of such classifications lies beyond the scope of this study<sup>1</sup>. In this brief summary I will only present the facts that other grammarians (see Bibliography) have already studied.

In the description of each case I have included (i) All the names given to these cases by different grammars and an abbreviated form that I will use in this study; (ii) case suffixes, and (iii) main function<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Those interested in this topic can have a look at Trask (1997: 93ff).

<sup>2</sup> In this summary I only present the main function/meaning of these cases, they have a wider range of uses; for a whole discussion of these see Euskaltzaindia (1991).

The Academy of the Basque Language (Euskaltzaindia 1991) classifies them into three groups: grammatical cases, locational cases and others.

Grammatical cases are those which shown agreement with the verb. These are:

- **Absolutive –(ABS)** (Nominative<sup>3</sup>, Passive):  $-\emptyset$ . This case is used (i) as a vocative, (ii) for the subject of an intransitive verb, (iii) for the direct object of a transitive verb, (iv) for the complement of a copular verb.
- **Ergative –(ERG)** (Accusative, Active):  $-k$ . It is used for the subject of a transitive verb.
- **Dative –(DAT)**:  $-i$ . It generally indicates the entity affected by the action. It marks indirect objects and ethic datives. Some intransitive and transitive verbs require this case. Many postpositions govern this case.

The second group is the locational cases.

- **Destinative –(DES)**:  $-rako$ ,  $(-rako(tz))$ . It expresses the inanimate entity towards which some action is directed. It is formed from the allative by the addition of  $-ko(tz)$ .
- **Locative –(LOC)** (Inessive):  $-n$ . It can be translated as ‘at, in, on’. It expresses position in space and time, and sometimes motion (‘into’).
- **Ablative –(ABL)** (Elative):  $-tik$ . It expresses the source of motion, and corresponds to English ‘from, out of, away from’.
- **Allative –(ALL)** (Lative):  $-(r)a$ ,  $(-rat, -lat)$ . It expresses the goal of motion, and can be translated as ‘to’.
- **Goal allative –(GOA)** (Terminative, approximative):  $-(r)aino$ ,  $(-r)adino$ . It expresses the end point, and corresponds to English ‘until, as far as, up to’. The allative and the ending  $-ino$  ( $-dino$ ) form this case.
- **Directional –(DIR)**:  $-(r)antz$ ,  $(-r)ontz$ ,  $-(r)untz$ . It expresses the direction of motion, and can be translated as ‘towards’. The allative and the ending  $-ntz$ .
- **Locative genitive –(ADN)**:  $-ko$ . This case has been treated as a special type of genitive. It expresses a relation of location. It corresponds to English ‘who/which is from/in/on/at’.

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<sup>3</sup> This label is mostly rejected by recent studies, but it is found in some descriptions of grammar (Lafon 1968, Zubiri and Zubiri 1995). The labels ‘nominative’ and ‘accusative’ are not appropriate for Basque case system. Basque is an ergative language at least in its morphology and as such it is more suitable to distinguish between ‘absolutive’ and ‘ergative’ rather than ‘nominative’ and ‘accusative’ (see Ortiz de Urbina 1989).

Other grammars do not accept this case and regard it as a *relational* or *adnominal* suffix *-ko*<sup>4</sup> (see Trask (1997: 100ff) for a summary of the main arguments in this view).

The rest of the cases that do not fit into the other two categories form the third group:

- **Genitive –(GEN)**: *-en*. It marks a possessor NP. Many postpositions govern this case.
- **Comitative –(COM)** (Sociative): *-ekin* (B *-gaz*, *-kaz* (pl.)). It corresponds to English ‘in the company of’. It can also indicate an instrument, but this is a novel usage (Trask 1997: 92).
- **Benefactive –(BEN)** (Destinative): *-entzat*. It expresses the person for whom something is done. It corresponds to English ‘for’. It is a combination of the genitive *-en* and *-tzat*.
- **Instrumental –(INST)** (Modal): *-z*. Its primary function is to express instrument (English ‘with’), but also ‘duration’ in temporal clauses. It can also be translated as ‘about’ in reference to a topic. Many postpositions and verbs required this case.
- **Causal –(CAU)** (Motivative): *-gatik*. It express the meaning ‘because of’. This case governs genitive<sup>5</sup>.
- **Prolative –(PROL)** (Essive, translative): *-tzat*. It expresses the capacity in which someone performs an act, the manner in which someone is regarded, and the capacity into which someone is translated.
- **Partitive –(PART)**: *-ik*. It marks the direct object of a negated transitive verb, the entity whose non-existence is asserted in negative existential sentence, and the direct object of non-negative questions. It is also used as an emphatic marker in affirmative sentences and for the complement in superlative clauses. Some vasconists do not consider the partitive case as such (Trask 1997: 93).

### 1.1. Case marking in Basque

All cases are marked by agglutinated suffixes. The case markers are attached to the last constituent of the NP and not to each of the members that form the NP as illustrated in (1). When verbs are nominalised they are also inflected as normal NPs; in (2), the verb *sar*<sup>6</sup> ‘enter’ is nominalised by means of the suffix *-t(z)e*, and then inflected in the partitive case. Basque is mainly postpositional, and

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<sup>4</sup> In this research I will take the latter position and indicate it as ADN.

<sup>5</sup> It is for these reason that many grammars see the causal not as case but as a postposition governing genitive instead (Trask 1997: 94).

<sup>6</sup> Note that the usual way to enunciate a Basque verb is not to give the radical (the stem functioning as a free form), i.e. *sar* as above, but the perfective participle instead, i.e. *sartu*.

most postpositions are case-inflected nouns. Some postpositions are governed by some of these cases as in (3), where the local noun *atze* ‘back’ takes the ablative case suffix, and governs the genitive case.

- (1) *Neska polit horrentzat*  
 girl beautiful that.BEN  
 ‘To that beautiful girl’
- (2) *Guk ez dugu hor sartzerik ala?*  
 we.ERG NEG have.1SG there enter.NOM.PART INTER  
 We can’t go inside or what? (EZ)
- (3) *Gu Mikelen atzetik joango gara*  
 we.ABS michael.GEN back.ABL go.FUT aux.1PL  
 ‘We’ll go after Michael’ (ZUB)

Basque does not have grammatical gender<sup>7</sup> or noun classes, and the same case suffixes are attached to all NPs without taking into account whether they are definite or indefinite, singular or plural. These notions are expressed in other members of the NP. For example, let us take the dative case whose suffix is an *-i* and analyse the following possibilities:

- (4) *Jon-i* ‘to John’  
 (5) *mutil-a-(r)-i* ‘to the boy’  
 (6) *mutil-e-i* ‘to the boys’  
 (7) *zein mutil-i?* ‘to which boy?’

In all these examples there is only one case marker for the dative, an *-i*. This is very clear in (4) where there is a proper noun which does not require a determiner. In (5) the sentence refers to a specific boy and therefore, it takes the definite article *-a*; an *-r-* is added in order to separate vowels in hiatus in non-plural forms. Sentence (6) refers to several boys; number is obtained by the plural definite

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<sup>7</sup> There is only one exception in the auxiliary system for the second person singular. Its use is restricted to familiar and friendly environments and shows a great dialectal variation.

article *-e-*, not by the case suffix, which remains the same, an *-i*. The indefinite determiner *zein* ‘which’ suggests that sentence (7) refers to an indeterminate boy<sup>8</sup>.

In Western varieties there is a distinct proximate plural which marks the proximity of the speakers in the discourse. For example, the word *lagun-ok* can mean ‘we friends (with the speaker included), you friends (without the speaker included)’.

Table 1 and Table 2 show the complete nominal paradigm for the case system in Basque for vowel-final nouns and consonant-final nouns respectively.

CASE	INDEFINITE	SINGULAR	PLURAL	PL. PROXIM.	MEANING <sup>9</sup>
ABSOLUTIVE	<i>-∅</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>-ak</i>	<i>-ok</i>	‘subj. int. DO’
ERGATIVE	<i>-k</i>	<i>-ak</i>	<i>-ek</i>	<i>-ok</i>	‘subj. trans.’
DATIVE	<i>-ri</i>	<i>-ari</i>	<i>-ei</i>	<i>-oi</i>	‘IO’
LOCATIVE	<i>-tan</i>	<i>-an</i>	<i>-etan</i>	<i>-otan</i>	‘inside, in, on, at’
ABLATIVE	<i>-tatik</i>	<i>-tik</i>	<i>-etatik</i>	<i>-otatik</i>	‘from, out of’
ALLATIVE	<i>-tara</i>	<i>-ra</i>	<i>-etara</i>	<i>-otara</i>	‘to, direction’
GOAL ALLATIVE	<i>-taraino</i>	<i>-raino</i>	<i>-etarano</i>	<i>-otaraino</i>	‘up to, as far as’
DIRECTIONAL	<i>-tarantz</i>	<i>-rantz</i>	<i>-etarantz</i>	<i>-otarantz</i>	‘towards’
DESTINATIVE	<i>-tarako</i>	<i>-rako</i>	<i>-etarako</i>	<i>-otarako</i>	‘for’
LOC. GENITIVE	<i>-tako</i>	<i>-ko</i>	<i>-etako</i>	<i>-otako</i>	‘non-personal possessive’
GENITIVE	<i>-ren</i>	<i>-aren</i>	<i>-en</i>	<i>-on</i>	‘possessive’
COMITATIVE	<i>-rekin</i>	<i>-arekin</i>	<i>-ekin</i>	<i>-okin</i>	‘with’
BENEFACTIVE	<i>-rentzat</i>	<i>-arentzat</i>	<i>-entzat</i>	<i>-ontzat</i>	‘for’
INSTRUMENTAL	<i>-z</i>	<i>-az</i>	<i>-ez</i>	<i>-oz</i>	‘about, by means of’
CAUSAL <sup>10</sup>	<i>-gatik</i>	<i>-gatik</i>	<i>-gatik</i>	<i>-gatik</i>	‘because of’
PARTITIVE	<i>-rik</i>				‘any, some’
PROLATIVE	<i>-tzat</i>				‘as’

Table 1: Nominal morphology: stems ending in a vowel.

<sup>8</sup> The indefinite paradigm is required in several other cases: personal pronouns, demonstratives, interrogative pronouns, numbers, indefinite pronouns, some verbs and expressions, *beste*, *adina* ‘other’, among others.

<sup>9</sup> All these meanings but the destinative are taken from Aulestia (1989).

<sup>10</sup> Remember that before this suffix this case requires the genitive *-en* in its different forms.

CASE	INDEFINITE	SINGULAR	PLURAL	PL. PROXIM.	MEANING <sup>11</sup>
ABSOLUTIVE	-∅	-a	-ak	-ok	‘subj. int. DO’
ERGATIVE	-ek	-ak	-ek	-ok	‘subj. trans.’
DATIVE	-i	-ari	-ei	-oi	‘IO’
LOCATIVE	-etan	-ean	-etan	-otan	‘inside, in, on, at’
ABLATIVE	-etatik	-tik	-etatik	-otatik	‘from, out of’
ALLATIVE	-etara	-era	-etara	-otara	‘to, direction’
GOAL ALLATIVE	-etaraino	-eraino	-etarano	-otaraino	‘up to, as far as’
DIRECTIONAL	-etarantz	-erantz	-etarantz	-otarantz	‘towards’
DESTINATIVE	-etarako	-erako	-etarako	-otarako	‘for’
LOC. GENITIVE	-etako	-eko	-etako	-otako	‘non-personal possessive’
GENITIVE	-en	-aren	-en	-on	‘possessive’
COMITATIVE	-ekin	-arekin	-ekin	-okin	‘with’
BENEFACTIVE	-entzat	-arentzat	-entzat	-ontzat	‘for’
INSTRUMENTAL	-ez	-az	-ez	-oz	‘about, by means of’
CAUSAL	-gatik	-gatik	-gatik	-gatik	‘because of’
PARTITIVE	-ik				‘any, some’
PROLATIVE	-tzat				‘as’

Table 2: Nominal morphology: stems ending in consonant.

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<sup>11</sup> All these meanings but the destinative are taken from Aulestia (1989).

## 2. LOCATIONAL CASES: MAIN CHARACTERISTICS

Locational cases form a special group within Basque cases not only because they share a common reference to space, but also because they do not behave exactly in the same way as the rest of the paradigm.

Their main differences are the following: (i) distinction between animate and inanimate NPs, (ii) lack of article *-a* in the definite singular form, and (iii) presence of infix *-ta-* in non-singular inanimate NPs.

Locational cases treat differently phrases headed by an animate noun and phrases headed by an inanimate noun<sup>12</sup>. Animate NPs in the Western varieties add a morph *-gan* to the genitive (which can optionally be dropped in the definite singular). Eastern varieties use the morph *baita-* instead<sup>13</sup>. Although in most cases *-gan* and *baita-* are interchangeable, there are some exceptions where these two forms are not equivalent.

- (8) *Urrun zaitez niganik*                    (\**ni baitarik*)  
 far IMP.2sg I.gan.ABL                    (I baita.ABL)  
 ‘Get away from me!’
- (9) *Ni baitarik sortu da pentsamendu hau*                    (\**nigandik*)  
 I baita.ABL originate.PERF AUX thought this                    (I.gan.ABL)  
 ‘That thought comes from me’

According to Euskaltzaindia (1991: 237) a possible explanation would be that in (8) *-ga* refers more to the area around the person whereas in (9) *baita-* refers to the interior of the person. In other words, the choice of *niganik* and *ni baitarik* depends on what part of the source we focus on.

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<sup>12</sup> As Laka (n.d) notices it is important to bear in mind that “what counts as an animate noun in the grammar of Euskara [Basque] is not determined by modern biology”. Although in most cases both coincide, there are a few pairs where they do not. This is the case of the reciprocal pronoun *elkar* which is always treated as animate even in those cases where the noun is an inanimate entity as in the following example:

(1) *Etxe hauek elkarrengandik hurbilegi daude*  
 house these recip.POSS.gan.ABL near.too are  
 ‘These houses are too near to each other’ (Laka n.d)

<sup>13</sup> Euskaltzaindia (1991) also suggest that *baita* could also be substituted by *buru* in Northern varieties in this kind of sentences (see Ibarretxe-Antuñano (2001a), for an analysis of the polysemy in the word *buru*).



It is important to notice that the locative case allows an animate NP to co-occur with the inanimate form. In these cases, the meaning is not ‘location’ but ‘among’. So, for example, *mutilengan* would denote ‘in/on the boys’, and *mutiletan* would be ‘among the boys’.

Table 3 shows the paradigm for the local cases of *mutil* ‘boy’.

CASE / DIALECT	INDEFINITE	DEFINITE SINGULAR	DEFINITE PLURAL
INE WEST	<i>mutil-en-gan</i>	<i>mutil-aren-gan</i>	<i>mutil-en-gan</i>
INE EAST	<i>mutil-en baita-n</i>	<i>mutil-aren baita-n</i>	<i>mutil-en baita-n</i>
ABL WEST	<i>mutil-en-gan-dik</i>	<i>mutil-aren-gan-dik</i>	<i>mutil-en-gan-dik</i>
ABL EAST	<i>mutil-en baita-rik</i>	<i>mutil-aren baita-rik</i>	<i>mutil-en baita-rik</i>
ALL WEST	<i>mutil-en-gan-a</i>	<i>mutil-aren-gan-a</i>	<i>mutil-en-gan-a</i>
ALL EAST	<i>mutil-en baita-ra</i>	<i>mutil-aren baita-ra</i>	<i>mutil-en baita-ra</i>

Table 3: Locational cases of animate NPs.

With regard to the origin of these markings, Jacobsen (1977) argues that *-gan* is the locative ending in all cases, leaving the locative suffix *-n* as a reduction of *gan*. Other authors such as de Rijk (1981) and Trask (1997) have challenged this view. The latter suggests that *gan* is originally a postposition, even the same morpheme as the noun *gain* ‘top’. He also suggests that *gan* was used in conjunction with the locative *-n*, and therefore, it becomes an alternative locative formation.

The origin of *bait(a)-* is unknown. It has been argued that the original meaning of this morph was ‘house’ –in Labourdin it is used to refer to ‘house’- and that its utilisation in locational NPs is only a generalisation. However, as Trask (1997) argues, although possible, it is a bit strange that not such a word for ‘house’ is found elsewhere in the language, and only *etxe* is the universally word for ‘house’ in Basque.

Another characteristic of these cases is that the definite singular does not show the article *-a*. Therefore, in the case of the word *etxe* ‘house’ the paradigm will be as follows: ablative *etxe-tik*, allative *etxe-ra* and locative *etxe-an*. Although the ending in the locative seems to indicate that this case takes a definite article, the consonant-ending stems show a singular locative ending in *-ean* (*zuhaitz-ean* ‘in the tree’).

The other characteristic of these cases is the presence of *-ta-* in non-singular inanimate NPs as in *zein etxetan?* (in/on/at which house?) and *etxeetan* (in/on/at the houses). Some authors (Lafon 1972: 1761; Omaechevarria 1962: 40; Schuchardt 1923: 46) have considered this infix as the same morph as the collective suffix *-eta* which is very common in place names such as *Kerejeta* (from *(k)gereiz*

‘cherry’), *Elorrieta* (from *elori* ‘hawthorn’). This suffix would then come from the Latin –ETUM /-ETA, of similar meaning as in *iliceta* ‘beech tree forest’, *roboreta* ‘oak tree forest’.

According to Trask (1997: 203), locational cases suffixes (*-n*, *-tik*, *-ra*) were added to the old collective form *-eta* in those words which denoted a group of something. And then, these strictly collective nouns were reinterpreted as the plural local cases that we have nowadays. Based on the fact that locational cases do not seem to involve the article in their formation, Trask argues that “number distinctions made possible by the article in the grammatical cases were extended to the local cases on a somewhat ad hoc basis”. Following this line of reasoning, the origin of the indefinite form *-ta* would be explained easily. The indefinite form of grammatical cases lacks the determiner, and as it is stated before, *-e-* was the mark for the plural definite article; therefore, Trask suggests that the *-e-* of *-eta* was reinterpreted as the plural marker and then, removed in order to obtain the indefinite forms.

A different view from Trask’s is Jacobsen’s (1975) (reported in Trask 1997). Based on the fact that in western varieties the plural *-eta* has a pitch accent *-età*, and on his thesis that accented morphs continue former geminate vowels, this author suggests a form with an overt plural marker included *\*-egeta*, which would come from *\*-eeta*.

### 3. LOCATIONAL CASES: DESCRIPTION

In this section, I summarise the basic descriptive and etymological information on these cases found in Basque traditional grammars<sup>14</sup> (see reference section).

#### 3.1. Basque locative case

The locative case suffix is *-n*<sup>15</sup>. In some northern varieties, Zuberoan in particular, there is a distinction between the suffix *-n* and *-an* only in the word *etxe* ‘house’. While *etxen* means ‘at home’, *etxean* means ‘in the house’. Instead of considering this distinction as an archaism<sup>16</sup>, some authors argue for an analogy under Romance influence (Trask 1997: 204).

This case is one of the most productive cases in the Basque case system. There are four main areas covered by this case: space, time, manner, and quantity.

The locative case is used to express ‘location in space’, the place in/on/at which something is.

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<sup>14</sup> The classification of different meanings, as well as their labels, is also taken from these grammars. This means that I do not necessarily comply with what I report in this section.

<sup>15</sup> See Jacobsen 1975, Rijk 1981, and Trask 1997 for a discussion on the relation between *-n* and *-gan*.

<sup>16</sup> Northern dialects are considered more conservative than the rest of Basque varieties.

- (8) *Negar egiten badu, besoetan hartu*  
 cry make.IMPERF if.aux.3SG arms.LOC take.PERF  
 ‘If he cries, take him in your arms’ (ZU)
- (9) *Liburua mahaian ipini dut*  
 book.DET.ABS table.LOC put.PERF aux.1SG  
 ‘I put the book on the table’
- (10) *Jon etxean dago*  
 john.ABS house.LOC is  
 ‘John is at home’

In these examples the locative case indicates the place where something is located. As it is argued in more detail in Section 4, this locative case does not specify whether that location is ‘in’, ‘on’, or ‘at’. This information is inferred from the physical characteristics that defined the landmark to which the locative case suffix is attached too, as well as from the world knowledge that we may have about the spatial configuration of these landmarks. Thus, in (9), the default location for the books is presupposed as the surface of the table, instead of, the interior of the table, i.e. in a drawer. This does not mean that this second interpretation cannot be inferred from this sentence. It can be, but based on our world knowledge, the preferred interpretation is ‘on the table’. This ambiguity can be solved if we give a more detailed description of where the book is by means of postpositions (see Section 5). If we use the postposition *gain* ‘top’ inflected with the locative case then, there is no doubt that we refer to the surface of the table. If we use the postposition *barru* ‘inside’ inflected with the locative case then, we refer to the inside part of the table. A similar explanation can be applied to sentence (10). The default interpretation is that John is inside the house, but this is only our presupposition based on the fact that houses are typically understood as containers, and therefore, if we say that ‘John is in the house’, we assume that we refer to the interior of the house. However, this is not necessarily true. Sentence (10) is ambiguous and therefore, it can also refer to the situation where John is outside the house, for example, in the garden of the house. What we need to understand here is that by ‘house’ we do not only refer to the house itself but to the area within the boundaries of the house.

The locative case is also used to express location in time as in (11).

- (11) *Mikel ostiralean etorriko da*  
 mike.ABS friday.LOC come.FUT aux.3SG  
 ‘Mike will come on Friday’

In (11), the locative case refers to a specific point or moment in time, Friday. The same interpretation is applied to those cases where locative case is used in conjunction with numbers to convey the time as in (12).

- (12) *Hirutetan trengeltokian elkartuko gara*  
 three.PL.LOC train.station.LOC meet.FUT aux.1PL  
 ‘We’ll meet at three o’clock at the train station’

In (13), the locative case does not refer to a point in time, but a span of time, in this case, a whole year.

- (13) *Lana urtebetetan bukatu nuen*  
 job.ABS year.full.LOC finish.PERF aux.1SG  
 ‘I finished the job in a year’

The locative case is also used to indicate ‘how many times’ as in (14).

- (14) *Hirutan egon naiz Estatu Batuetan*  
 three.LOC be.PERF aux.1SG state united.LOC  
 ‘I’ve been three times to the United States’

Examples (11) to (14) are treated as different meanings of the locative case in the domain of time. However, I would argue that instead of four different meanings, there is only one unique meaning: ‘location in time’. The different interpretations in each of these cases are dependent on: (i) the landmarks themselves (compare *hilabete* ‘month’ and *ostirala* ‘Friday’); (ii) the type of verb, its aktionsart (compare *egon* ‘stay’ and *elkartu* ‘meet’), and its aspect (punctual, durative); and (iii) on the

definite or indefinite use of the locative case itself<sup>17</sup> (compare *hiruetan* ‘three.pl.loc’ and *hirutan* ‘three.loc’. I will argue in Section 4 that these are cases of ‘compositional polysemy’.

When the locative case is attached to certain noun phrases, these can function as manner complements as in (12).

- (12) *Patxadan egin zuen lana*  
 calm.LOC make.PERF aux.3SG work.ABS.DET  
 ‘He did his job slowly’

The locative case is also used to indicate how much money as in (13).

- (13) *Hiru mila pezetatan erosi zuen*  
 three thousand peseta.LOC buy.PERF aux.3SG  
 ‘He bought it for three thousand pesetas’

Here again, I will argue that it is an example of ‘compositional polysemy’ since it is necessary for the landmark to have a money-related meaning, i.e. *hiru mila pezetatan* ‘three thousand pesetas’

The locative case also occurs with certain nouns which denote ‘activities’ as in (14).

- (14) *Pokerrean jolastea gustatzen zaio*  
 poker.det.loc play.ger.abs like.hab aux.3sg.3sg  
 ‘He likes playing poker’

Finally, the locative case is also used as an emphatic marker both with the partitive case – *isil-ik-an* (silence.PAR.LOC) ‘quietly’- and with the ablative case – *mendi-tik-an* (mountain.ABL.LOC) ‘from the mountain’.

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<sup>17</sup> The indefinite and definite are underlined in the examples.

### 3.2. Basque ablative case

The ablative case suffix is *-tik*. This suffix has different dialectal variations: *-ti*, *-ik* with certain place names in Bizkaian, Zuberoan, and Roncalese, as well as in some frozen expressions (*ordurik ona* ‘since then, B *arik* ‘from there’), *-etarik* for the ablative plural in eastern dialect. The ablative in old Bizkaian had a totally different ending *-(r)ean*. Trask (1997: 205) analyses this case ending as composed of the postposition *\*gan* (see above) and the archaic genitive *\*-(r)e*.

It has been argued that *-tik* may be a combination of a possible original ablative case *-ti*<sup>18</sup> and the partitive *-ik*. However, it has also been suggested that the ancient ablative suffix may have been the partitive *-ik*, now replaced by the form *-ti(k)*.

In traditional accounts the prototypical meaning of the ablative case is usually defined as the ‘source of motion’, both in the spatial and temporal dimensions as illustrated in (15) and (16) respectively.

- (15) *Mikel etxetik dator*  
 michael.ABS house.ABL comes  
 ‘Michael comes from the house’

- (16) *Astelehenetik nago hemen*  
 monday.ABL am here.LOC  
 ‘I’m here since Monday’

These grammars also mentioned several other meanings for the ablative case. In some contexts, the ablative can also convey the meaning ‘through’ as in (17). I will argue in Section 4, that this is another case of ‘compositional polysemy’.

- (17) *Antza denez, lapurrak lehiotik sartu dira*  
 seem aux.INSTR thief.PL.ABS window.ABL enter.PERF AUX  
 ‘It seems that the thieves came in through the window’ ZZ350

Certain noun phrases bearing the ablative case are used to express ‘manner’ as in (18), and ‘activity’ as in (19).

- (18) *Gogotik lan egin dugu, baina alferrik*  
 will.ABL work do.PERF AUX but lazy.PART  
 ‘We worked really hard but in vain’ ZZ351
- (19) *Esatetik egitera alde itzela dago*  
 say.GER.ABL do.GER.ALL side big.DET is  
 ‘There is a big difference between saying and doing’ ZZ351

### 3.3. Basque allative case

The allative case suffix is *-ra*. This suffix is *-a* in three specific circumstances: with place names, with demonstratives, and after *-gan* in animate NPs. Trask (1997: 206) hypothesizes that the latter is the most ancient form, being displaced by the innovative form *-ra*. This displacement would have been favoured by two factors: the form *hara* ‘thither’ with *r-* as part of the stem, and the ambiguity caused by the introduction of the use of the article *a* in words such as *mendi-a*. In these cases, the introduction of an *-r-* would maintain the grammatical contrast. There is another allative suffix in northern dialects *-rat*<sup>19</sup>, which might come from *\*-rada*.

In traditional accounts the prototypical meaning of the ablative case is usually defined as the ‘goal of motion’, both in the spatial and temporal dimensions as illustrated in (20) and (21) respectively.

- (20) *Mikel San Franziskora joan da*  
 mike.ABS SF.ALL go.PERF aux.3SG  
 ‘Mike went to San Francisco’

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<sup>18</sup> Lafon (1972: 1761) argues that this *-ti* originally is the same morph as the derivational suffix *-ti* (this has two main meanings: collective *sagasti* ‘apple orchard’ and adjectival *ausarti* ‘bold, plucky’)

<sup>19</sup> Zuberoan adds some more variants *-la*, *-lat*, *-alat*, *-ialat*, *-ilat* (see Rijk 1981, and Trask 1997 for further discussion on these suffixes).

- (21) *Mikel astelehenetik larunbatera lan egiten du*  
 mike.ABS monday.ABL saturday.ALL work make.HAB aux.3SG  
 ‘Mike works from Monday to Saturday’

It is important to notice that the use of the allative case in the time frame is restricted to those expressions where both the source and goal of time are included, that is to say, when we specify both from when and until when. The specification of source and goal of motion is a very frequent strategy in Basque, not only in temporal clauses but also in spatial ones. Ibarretxe-Antuñano (2001b) calls this strategy the ‘complete path hypothesis’, i.e. the tendency to linguistically express in the same clause both the source and goal of a translational motion, even in cases where one of the components is pleonastic.

For those cases when we only want to refer to the goal of time, then we cannot use the allative case, but the postposition *arte* as in (22)<sup>20</sup>.

- (22) *Ordubata arte hemen lanean geldituko naiz*  
 one until here.LOC work.LOC stay.FUT aux.1SG  
 ‘I’ll be working here until 1 p.m.’

The allative case is also used for the expression of purposes or aims as in (23).

- (23) *Perretxikutara joan da*  
 mushroom.ALL go.PERF aux.3SG  
 ‘He went to pick up mushrooms’<sub>ET</sub>

Notice that in the noun phrase *perretxikutara* ‘for mushrooms’ the verb is presupposed. There is no need to use a verb like *hartu* ‘take’. This is very common in this type of expressions, for instance, *ardotara* ‘for wine’, *uretara* ‘for water’, *mezatarra* ‘to mass’... In all these expressions the verb is omitted. In case we wanted to use the verb, this would be nominalised and then, inflected in the allative case too as in (24).

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<sup>20</sup> Euskaltzaindia (1991: 267-270) compares *arte* with the goal allative case since both focus on an end-point goal.



- (24) *Perretxikuak hartzera joan da*  
 mushroom.ABS.PL take.NOM.ALL go.PERF aux.3SG  
 ‘He went to pick up mushrooms’

Finally, there are some manner complements which are formed with the allative case. For instance, *euskal erara* ‘in the Basque way’, *aisira* ‘as you like it’, and so on.

### 3.3.1. Basque destinative or goal allative case

The goal allative *-raino* is morphologically and semantically based on the allative case. In those varieties with the allative suffix *-rat*, the goal allative has the variant *-radino*. This suffix seems to have derived from the postposition *gino*, which is attested in old and modern Bizkaian with and without a preceding allative in expressions such as *azken aderratarara gino* ‘up to the last branch’ (Hualde and Ortiz de Urbina in press), and *oraingiño* ‘until now’. De Rijk (1992) proposes that *giño* is a reduction of the form *\*-gain-do*, composed of the noun *gain* ‘top’ and an archaic allative ending *-\*do*.

The goal allative conveys the meaning ‘until, up to’ in the spatial domain<sup>21</sup>.

- (25) *Etxeraino oinez joan da*  
 house.GOA foot.INSTR go.PERF aux.3SG  
 ‘S/He walked up to the house’

### 3.3.2. Basque directional allative case

As it was the case with the goal allative, this case is also morphologically and semantically based on the allative case. Apart from the suffix *-rantz*, it has two variations in Bizkaian and Gipuzkoan dialects, *-runtz* and *-rontz*, respectively (Azkue 1969). Gómez (ms.) views the etymological origin of this suffix as calque from Latin *ad...uersum* ‘toward’. The directional allative following the Latin expression would consist of the allative suffix and a nominal expression *\*ontz* with a similar meaning to Latin *uersum*.

This case conveys the notion of ‘towards’ in the spatial domain<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Apart from some frozen expressions, the goal allative case cannot be applied to the temporal domain, see discussion on *arte* above.

<sup>22</sup> The directional allative cannot be applied to the temporal domain.

- (26) *Etxerantz abiatu da*  
 house.DIR set.off.PERF aux.3SG  
 ‘S/He went towards the house’

#### 4. Discussion: major problems possible solutions

As we have seen in the previous section, traditional grammars give locational cases a wide variety of uses and meanings. But, the question that we should ask now is whether those different meanings that each of the locational cases appear to convey are really caused by the locational case itself, or by the use of the locational case in a particular situation, i.e. specific verb, specific landmark. For instance, what determines the interpretation of the ablative as ‘source’ and as ‘through’? Is it due to the semantics of the ablative case or the semantic content of the other elements in the sentence?

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the relationships among these different meanings. Questions such as the following are fundamental: are these meanings really ‘different’ uses or are they derived from a prototypical meaning? If all these meanings are conveyed by one locational case, what do they have in common? Do they suggest a similar or different conceptualisation of space? Would this conceptualisation of space change depending on the co-occurring elements? How could we show this change?

Answers for these questions are not easy ones, and in this paper, I do not aim at providing a full picture and thorough explanation for each of the issues raised in this section. My goal is to give some hints on possible ways to go about these issues. Therefore, first of all I will discuss some cognitive tools provided by the framework of Cognitive Linguistics that may help us a great deal when explaining the conceptualisation of space in locational cases. Then, I will show how these tools can be applied to the analysis of some of the cases that we reviewed in Section 3.

##### 4.1. Cognitive tools for the analysis of space and motion

One of the most fruitful research areas in Cognitive Linguistics is the analysis of polysemy. There are many studies<sup>23</sup> devoted to the explanation of the relationships among the different senses of polysemous structures. From these studies, I select six different tools or mechanisms that will help us in our endeavor:

(i) Notions of **trajector** and **landmark** (Langacker 1987, 1991), and **figure** and **ground** (Talmy 1985, 1991, 2000)

A ‘trajector’ is the more highly profiled participant in a relation, and a ‘landmark’ is a salient but less highly entity in a relation. The LM provides a point of reference for location the trajector in prototypical cases, and sometimes, although not necessarily, the TR is a moving entity.

According to Talmy (1985: 61), the figure is “a moving or conceptually movable object whose path or site is at issue”, and the ‘ground’ “a reference-frame, or a reference-point stationary within a reference-frame, with respect to which the Figure’s path or site is characterised”

(ii) Concept of **profiling** (Langacker 1987, 1991)

Langacker (1987: 490) defines a ‘profile’ as “the entity designated by a semantic structure. It [...] functions as the focal point within the objective scene, and achieves a special degree of prominence (resulting in one level of figure/ground organisation)”.

(iii) **Image schemas** (Johnson 1987)

These are abstract and pre-conceptual gestalt structures based on our perceptual interaction, bodily experience and motor programmes, which organise our experience and comprehension. Image schemas are recurring structures with a “relatively small number of parts or components that stand in very definite relations to one another” (Johnson 1987: 79).

From the possible list of image schemas, I think three of them are basic for the analysis of Basque locational cases: the Source-Path-Goal (SPG), the Part-Whole (PW), and the Boundary (BND).

The **Source-Path-Goal** image schema (Johnson 1987) structures a finite path. It has three roles or components: source (starting point), path (the route from the source to the goal), goal (intended destination).

The **Part-Whole** image schema (Johnson 1987) relates a part to its related whole. It has two roles or components: part, whole.

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<sup>23</sup> This is especially true in the case of prepositions, see Brugman (1981), Cuyckens (1991), Herskovits (1987), Lindner (1982), Vandeloise (1984), among others.

The **Boundary** image schema (Bretones, Cristóbal, Ibarretxe 2001) relates a boundary to a one-, two-, three- dimensional space. It has three roles or components: region A, boundary, region B.

In recent research within the framework of Embodied Construction Grammar (Bergen, Chan, Paskin in press; see also Bretones, Cristóbal, Ibarretxe 2001)<sup>24</sup>, image schemas have been understood as structures that can be retrieved by simulation in the brain. The relations between different schemas are presented as semantic constraints for specific constructions; these relations are expressed in terms of ‘bindings’ between the roles or components of these image schemas.

(iv) **Lexical networks** (Lakoff 1987, Langacker 1991, 2000, Rice 1996, Sandra and Rice 1995)

‘Lexical networks’ are structures that graphically show the relations among the different senses on the basis of how far they are conceptually situated from each other and of how they are interconnected.

A special kind of lexical network is that proposed by Lakoff (1987). His proposal is based on a radial structure for conceptual categories. The different senses of a given word “form a radially structured category, with a central member and links defined by image-schema transformations and metaphors” (1987: 460). The prototype or central member of a category can be predicted; non-central members, on the other hand, are not predictable, but they are motivated by the family resemblances with the prototype.

(iv) **Compositional or graduable polysemy** (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 1999a)

The concept of ‘compositional polysemy’ stems from that of ‘gradable polysemy’ (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 1999a). The basic idea is that the different polysemes of a lexical item are obtained through the interaction of the semantic content of both the lexical item itself and its different co-occurring elements. The weight of the semantics of these elements in the creation of polysemes is not always the same, it varies according to the degree of semantic influence of these elements. Cases where it is possible to predict what the interpretation is by means of the

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<sup>24</sup> More details about this work can be found in the Neural Theory of Language research group web page, <http://www.icsi.berkeley.edu/~NTL>.

choice of arguments are examples of ‘predictable polysemy’, those in which it is not possible this prediction are instances of ‘unpredictable polysemy’ (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 1999b).

(v) **Metaphor** (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999)

Metaphor is defined as a ‘mapping’ or ‘projection’ between different experiential conceptual domains. This mapping takes place between a ‘source’ domain, usually more concrete, and a ‘target’ domain, more abstract.

## 4.2. Some thoughts, some ideas, some examples...

### 4.2.1. Lexical networks and prototypical meanings

If we look at the variety of senses conveyed by the locative case, for example, we might think that this case is very polysemous. As we have seen in the previous section, it appears to convey up to seven ‘different’ meanings. But, are those meanings really different? Are they related in some way to one another?

My own answer is that these meanings are not to be considered ‘different’ senses, but ‘motivated’ extensions of a prototypical meaning of the locative case. In prototype categorisation theory (cf. Rosch 1973, 1977, 1978, 1983; Rosch and Mervis 1975; Mervis and Rosch 1981), a ‘prototype’ is the best, the most prominent and the most typical member of a category. It is the example that first comes to mind when one thinks of that category. Therefore, a ‘prototypical meaning’ can be defined as the most prominent and most typical meaning of the locational case.

A major problem that this type of approach faces is how to determine what the prototypical meaning is. One possibility is to choose a meaning that comprises the main characteristics of the array of meanings possible for the lexical item under investigation. For example, Brugman (1981) chooses ‘the above-across’ sense as the ‘central’ or ‘prototypical’ meaning for the preposition *over*. This kind of approach is nevertheless problematic because many times these choices of prototypical meanings do not correspond to what appears to be the prototypical meaning(s) of these lexical items in corpus data or language acquisition data. Ibarretxe-Antuñano and Serratrice (1999) point out, for instance, that in the case of *over*, the meaning ‘above-across’ proposed by Brugman is very rare and quite lately acquired in children’s instances of this preposition.

In the case of locational cases, I propose that all the prototypical meanings of these cases are related to the domain of space. The prototypical meaning for each of these cases may be the following:

- Locative case → ‘location’
- Ablative case → ‘source’
- Allative case → ‘goal’
- Directional allative case → ‘direction’
- Goal allative case → ‘end-point’

The rest of the senses, as I briefly explain below, are linked to this prototypical sense by means of a complex hierarchical network of image schemas, metaphors, and compositional polysemy.

#### 4.2.2. Image schemas and profiling in locational cases

The main function of image schemas in the characterisation of locational cases is to give us an idea of the preconceptual structures that take place in the conceptualisation of space in Basque. As I mentioned in the previous section, two are the main image schemas that apply to Basque locational cases: the Boundary image schema and the Source Path Goal image schema. Each of these schemas has a number of roles or components. And it is precisely the profiling of specific roles within these schemas what really distinguishes each of these cases from one another. Table 4 illustrates a possible distribution of these schemas and profiling of roles in each locational case.

LOCATIONAL CASE	IMAGE SCHEMA	PROFILED ROLE
Locative	Boundary schema	Region A
Ablative	Source Path Goal schema	Source
Allative	Source Path Goal schema	Goal
Directional allative	Source Path Goal schema	Goal + Path (vector)
Goal allative	Source Path Goal schema	Goal + Path (limits-end)

Table 1: Characterisation of locational cases by image schemas and profiling

The locative case is characterised by the role of region A of the boundary image schema. This region A is understood as a 1DM, 2DM, or 3DM region<sup>25</sup> with permeable boundaries. The Source Path Goal image schema defines both the ablative and the allative cases. However, the profiled roles in each case are different, the source for the ablative case, and the goal for the allative case.

An issue that needs further investigation is how to characterise the differences among the three allative cases. I think it is possible to view the directional and goal allatives as sub-types of the allative case. This is reasonable not only because they are morphologically as well as semantically derived from the allative (see Section 3.3), but also because the allative itself, in some specific contexts and with the right co-occurring elements, can function similarly to either of these two cases. In other words, the allative case may be interpreted as a directional allative in cases such as (27), and as a goal allative in cases such as (28).

(27) *Etxera abiatu zen*  
 house.ALL set.off.PERF aux.3SG  
 ‘S/He went towards the house’

(28) *Etxera iritsi nintzen*  
 house.ALL arrive.PERF aux.1SG  
 ‘I arrived home’

The different interpretation of the allative case in these two sentences depends upon the semantics of the co-occurring elements<sup>26</sup>. In (27), the verb *abiatu* ‘set off’ implies directionality, and consequently, the allative is interpreted as a directional allative. In (28), on the other hand, the verb *iritsi* ‘arrive’ implies an end-point, and therefore, the allative case is interpreted as a goal allative.

It is also important to notice that sometimes the directional and goal interpretations are also linked to the aspectual characteristics of the verb.

(29) *Zure lagunak ikusi ninduenean, etxera nihoan*  
 your friend.ERG see.PERF aux.1SG.3SG house.ALL go.1SG.PAST.IMPERF  
 ‘When your friend saw me I was going home’

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<sup>25</sup> The choice of the dimensionality will be given by the specific characteristics of the landmarks.

- (30) *Erosketak egin ondoren etxera joan nintzen*  
 shopping.ABS.PL make.PERF aux.3SG after house.ALL go.PERF aux.1SG.PAST  
 ‘After I did my shopping I went home’

Unlike in the previous examples, in (29) and (30) the motion verb *joan* ‘go’ does not participate in the selection of one of the two possible interpretations. What really drives us to do so is the imperfective and perfective verbal aspect. In (29), the imperfective aspect implies a directional interpretation, and in (30), the perfective aspect a goal interpretation.

There are, of course, cases where it is not possible to suggest a directional or goal interpretation in the allative case. In sentences like (31), the allative case simply profiles the goal, the house, as the intended destination.

- (31) *Zoaz etxera!*  
 go.2SG.PRES home.ALL  
 ‘Go home!’

Based on these data (examples 27-31), I think it is possible to say that the directional and goal allatives inherit down from the allative case the goal as the profiled role. What seems to be a crucial difference between these two cases and the allative is the fact that, on top of it, both directional and goal allatives also profile the path, or to be more precise, some of the components of the path. The directional allative profiles what Talmy (2000) calls the ‘vector’, i.e. the directionality of the path. The goal allative, on the other hand, profiles one of the limits of the path, the end-point<sup>27</sup>. This ‘extra’ profiled role is absent from the allative case.

Images schemas are not only useful for distinguishing among different types of locational cases as we have just seen, they are also necessary for understanding, explaining, and formalising some of those intuitions that speakers have about their language, and that sometimes are superseded in reference grammars. A very good example to illustrate this situation is the alternation of the locative case and the allative case with verbal predicates such as *sartu* ‘enter’. Let us look at the following examples:

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<sup>26</sup> These are cases of ‘compositional polysemy’, see Section 4.2.3.

<sup>27</sup> The goal allative, is in other words, a telic case.



- (32) *Mikel gelan sartu da*  
 mikel room.LOC enter.PERF aux.3SG  
 ‘Michael went into the room’

- (33) *Mikel gelara sartu da*  
 mikel room.ALL enter.PERF aux.3SG  
 ‘Michael went into the room’

Both examples describe the same type of event: there is a trajector (*Mikel*) who moves along the path, crosses a boundary to end up inside the landmark (*gela*). However, the inferences that we obtain from these two different examples are not the same. Whereas in (32), the inference is that we went inside and stayed there for some period of time; this information is absent in (33), and we only infer that this person reached his intended destination, without further elaboration of the time he spent there. In other words, there is a durational-transitory contrast between these two cases.

If we look at the different elements that form these sentences, both are identically the same in everything apart from the choice of locational case. Therefore, the key to the explanation of why there are different inferences in these examples must lie on the locational case. But how can we show this?

In my opinion, the fine-grained differences between (32) and (33) are neatly explained and formalised by means of image schemas, as well as via the bindings that occur between the roles that form these image schemas, and compositional polysemy between these cases and the main path verb.

The verb *sartu* ‘enter’ activates two kinds of schemas: a Boundary schema, and a Source-Path-Goal schema. The profiled roles for this verb are the boundary and Region B roles in the BDN schema and the Goal in the SPG schema. The Region B role is equivalent, or in Embodied Construction Grammar terms ‘bounded’, to the Goal role. In (32), the locative case activates the Boundary schema, and the profiled role is Region B<sup>28</sup>. In other words, there is no motion implied in the locative case, but a static situation that is ‘double’ profiled by both the verb and the locative case. The goal of motion is only profiled by the verb. In (33), on the contrary, the allative case brings in a Source-Path-Goal schema with the goal role profiled. Consequently, the goal of motion in this sentence is ‘double’ profiled both by the allative and by the verb, whereas the stativeness is only brought in by the verb.

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<sup>28</sup> Notice that we said that the profiled role for the locative case is Region A, and not B. In this example, it is Region B due to deictic reasons. If we use the verb *atera* ‘exit’, the profiled role is A because this is the area where the motion starts from before crossing the boundary. If we use the verb *sartu* ‘enter’ as in these two examples, the profiled Region is B, since the focus of our attention now lies on the goal, the trajector starts in Region A, crosses the boundary and arrives at Region B.

The different profiled roles in these two locational cases together with those in the verb are responsible for the different inferences in these otherwise ‘almost identical’ sentences. As I will explain in more detail in the following section, a sentence like (32) obtains its meaning by means of ‘compositional polysemy’. That is, the meaning of a ‘durational goal of motion’ is obtained as a result of the semantics of the locative case (‘static’) in conjunction with the semantics of the verb *sartu* (‘motion to the goal’). Without these two elements such an inference is not possible. If we got rid of any of these two elements and substituted them for others, we would end up with at least three different possibilities: (i) with a sentence whose meaning is like that in (33), i.e. ‘motion to the goal’; (ii) with an infelicitous sentence like (34), where the locative and the motion verb are not compatible; or (iii) with a stative sentence like (35), where the locative and the verb *egon* ‘stay’ convey an static meaning.

(34) \**Mikel gelan joan da*  
 mikel room.LOC go.PERF aux.3SG  
 ‘Michael went in the room’

(32) *Mikel gelan dago*  
 mikel room.LOC stays.3SG  
 ‘Michael is in the room’

The reverse situation would hold for sentence (33). A sentence with an allative and a static verb would be infelicitous, and a sentence with an allative and a motion verb would convey a motion to the goal meaning.

The fact that there are infelicitous sentences indicates that we cannot simply ‘put together’ different elements in order to obtain a ‘compositional meaning’, as it is suggested in traditional Fregean semantics. Meanings are componential, but the elements that we put together in a componential fashion are constrained by the semantic properties intrinsic to themselves. In other words, only elements whose semantic properties are ‘compatible’ can produce semantic felicitous sentences<sup>29</sup>.

#### 4.2.3. Compositional Polysemy in Locational Cases

Since we have already mentioned Compositional Polysemy in various places in this paper, I will only discuss one more example in this section in order to elaborate a little bit further the basic

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<sup>29</sup> Ibarretxe-Antuñano (1999a) calls this constraint ‘property requirement’.

concepts of predictable and unpredictable compositional polysemy. The discussion, therefore, focuses on the two spatial meanings in the ablative case: ‘source’ and ‘through’. The basic idea I would like to put forward is that the prototypical meaning of the Basque ablative case is ‘source’, and that the ‘through’ meaning is an extension obtained by ‘compositional polysemy’ in different degrees of compositionality. Let us look at some examples:

- (36) *Mikel lehiotik sartu da*  
 mikel window.ABL enter.PERF aux.3SG  
 ‘Michael went into the room through the window’

The meaning conveyed in (36) is ‘through’. This is obtained thanks to the interaction of the semantics of *sartu* ‘enter’, a verb with profiled Region B and Boundary roles of the BND schema, and the goal of the SPG schema, the semantic content of *lehiotik* ‘window’, a noun which is understood as a portal, and the ablative case itself ‘source’. The interpretation of this sentence as ‘through’ is somewhat driven by the semantics of these elements when put together. The verb *sartu* already predicts a boundary crossing of some sort, and the fact that the window is a portal, a transversable boundary, allows or predisposes the ablative to take the meaning ‘through’ in addition to the prototypical ‘source’. It is important to point out that the ‘source’ meaning of the ablative is not cancelled by the meaning ‘through’. The window is still the source of motion for the boundary crossing into the room, therefore, the ‘through’ meaning is added to that of ‘source’ as a result of the interaction of the semantic content of the co-occurring elements.

- (37) *Mikel lehiotik etorri da*  
 mikel window.ABL come.PERF aux.3SG  
 (a) ‘Michael came into the room through the window’  
**OR**  
 (b) ‘Michael came from the window’

Sentence (37) is ambiguous. Both interpretations, ‘through’ as illustrated in Figure 1 and ‘source’ as illustrated in Figure 2, are possible if we do not take into account a disambiguating external context.

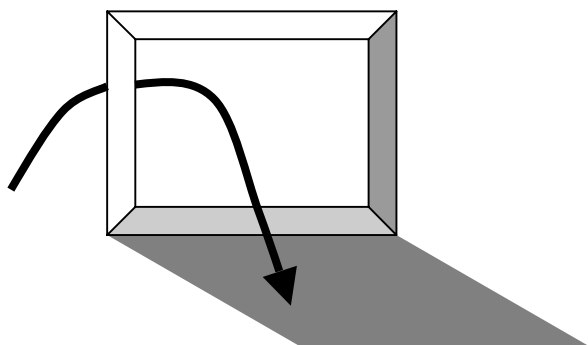


Figure 1: ‘through’ in ablative

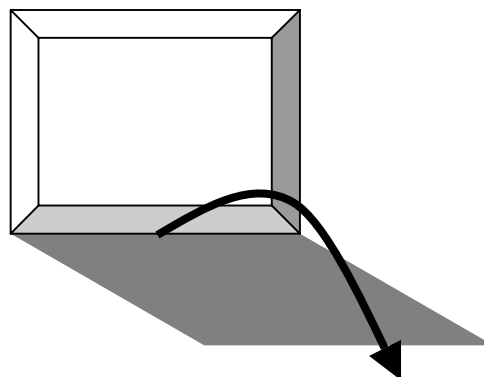


Figure 2: ‘source’ in ablative

The main difference with respect to sentence (36) is that the cross-boundary verb *sartu* is replaced by a deictic motion verb *etorri* ‘come’. This change of verb causes the sentence to be ambiguous because it does not ‘favour’ one interpretation over the other. The landmark *lechio* ‘window’ also contributes to the creation of this ambiguity: it is a transversable boundary, but at the same time it is also a reference point functioning as the source of motion.

In (36), the semantics of the verb *sartu* pick up one of the possible meanings of window, that of transversable portal. Consequently, the meaning of (36) is ‘through’. In (37), the semantics of the verb *etorri* cannot do so. *Etorri* can be applied to both situations, but it does not specifically imply one or the other as *sartu* does. In other words, the meaning of (36) is ‘predicted’ by the verb *sartu*, whereas the meaning of (37) is ‘not predicted’ by the verb *etorri*. Sentences such as those in (36) are cases of ‘predictable polysemy’, sentences such as those in (37) are cases of ‘unpredictable polysemy’.

#### 4.2.4. Metaphor

The last issue that I would like to touch on is that of non-physical spatial meanings in the locational cases. As we have seen in Section 3, some of these cases can convey meanings such as ‘time reference’, ‘purpose’, ‘manner’, and so on. My claim is that these are extended senses of the prototypical meaning of the locational case, and that these meanings are structured by means of metaphor.

One of the most recurrent extended meanings in locational cases is that of ‘time’. Except for the directional and goal allatives, the other three locational cases have meaning extensions onto the domain of time. The link between space and time has been the object of research in numerous studies within different disciplines in linguistics. It is now well established that one of the most common and regular semantic changes in languages is the unidirectional shift from space onto time (cf. Traugott 2001).

When it comes to explain how the relationship between space and time takes place, there are several proposals. Langacker (1987, 1991) for instance, proposes the concept of ‘abstract motion’. Other authors within Cognitive Linguistics view these process as resulting from a metaphorical mapping, where space is the source domain, and time is the target domain. So for example, in a sentence like (38), the metaphor at play would be LOCATION IN TIME IS LOCATION IN SPACE<sup>30</sup>

- (38) *1972. urtean jaio nintzen*  
 1972<sup>nd</sup> year.LOC be.born aux.1SG  
 ‘I was born in the year 1972’

Another case that belongs to the general metaphor of time is space is illustrated in (39).

- (39) *1995etik 1999ra Edinburgon bizi nintzen*  
 1999.ABL 1999.ALL edinburgh.LOC live aux.1SG  
 ‘I lived in Edinburgh from 1995 to 1999’

In this sentence, the metaphor is PERIOD OF TIME IS A COMPLETE PATH<sup>31</sup>. That is, the physical distance between a source and a goal of motion is mapped onto the domain of time, so that the distance is understood as the period of time between two different times, the year 1995 and the year 1999.

One of the possible meanings of the allative case is ‘purpose’ as in sentence (24) reproduced here as (40).

- (40) *Perretxikutara joan da*  
 mushroom.ALL go.PERF aux.3SG  
 ‘He went to pick up mushrooms’<sub>ET</sub>

In this sentence, the allative conveys the meaning of ‘purpose’. This extension of meaning can be explained by means of the metaphor PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS (Lakoff 1987, 1993). The mapping in this metaphor takes place from the physical domain of a goal of motion, onto a more

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<sup>30</sup> We have to bear in mind too that this is also another case of ‘compositional polysemy’ since the mention of the lexical item *urte* triggers such an interpretation in the domain of time.

<sup>31</sup> Recall that complete path is when both the source and goal of motion are explicitly mentioned even in cases when one of the components is pleonastic.

abstract domain where goals are no longer physical destinations but metaphorical goals. In (40), this metaphorical goal is to pick up mushrooms.

## 5. Basque postpositions

Basque, as it is characteristic of OV languages, is a postpositional language. Most postpositions govern the genitive case *-(r)en*, and some the ablative case *-tik* and the allative case *-ra*. Most of them are also inflected in the locational cases. Let us draw some examples with the postpositions *gain* ‘top’.

(41) *Paperak mahai(aren) gainean daude*  
 paperABS.PL table.GEN top.LOC aux.3PL  
 ‘The papers are on the table’

(42) *Paperak mahai(aren) gainetik erori dira*  
 paper.ABS.PL table.GEN top.LOC fall.PERF aux.3PL  
 ‘The papers fell from the (top of) the table’

In (41), the postposition *gain* ‘top’ is inflected in the locative case. This tells us that the top of the table is the location where the papers are. This is usually translated into English as ‘on the table’, but remember from section 3.1 that the locative case in Basque only gives reference to a location and is equivalent to English ‘in, on, at’. In (42), the postposition is inflected in the ablative case, thus, this time it tells us that the top of the table is the source of movement: the place where the papers fell from.

In both examples, the object to which the postposition *gain* refers to, the landmark, is governed by the genitive. Since the landmark, *mahai* ‘table’, is both inanimate and singular the genitive case is optional.

However, the landmarks of all postpositions do not necessarily take the genitive case. Let us illustrate this point with the postposition *behe* ‘bottom, below’.

(43) *Aldapabehera arin doa*  
 hill bottom.ALL running goes  
 ‘He runs down the hill’

- (44) *Eskaileretan behera jaitsi da*  
 stairs.PL.LOC bottom.ALL descend.PERF aux.3SG  
 ‘He went down the stairs’
- (45) *Lehiotik behera erori da*  
 window.ABL bottom.ALL fall.PERF aux.3SG  
 ‘He fall down from the window’

In these three examples the postposition *behe* ‘bottom’ is inflected in the allative case, that is to say, the goal of the motion is always directed downwards. However, the case that the landmark takes in each of these sentences is different. In (43), the landmark *aldapa* ‘hill’ does not take any case, in (44) the landmark *eskaileretan* ‘stairs’ takes the locative case, and in (45), the landmark *lechio* ‘window’ takes the ablative case.

If we only take a descriptive viewpoint as traditional grammars do, then, it is almost impossible to explain the subtle differences that underlie these examples. The simpleminded explanation would be just to say that there is a downward movement from the landmark. However, the conceptualisation of the space is different. In (43) and (44), the path described in the downward motion is part of the space covered by the hill and the stairs respectively; it is within the boundaries of these two landmarks. In (45), on the contrary, the path described is not part of the window itself. The window is only the source of the motion, it the place where the movement started from, but the bottom does not refer to the bottom of the window, as it was the case in the hill and the stairs, but the area situated below the window. Therefore, the path is not part of the space of the window, but the distance from the window to the area below. I have argued elsewhere that this type of sentences are examples of the ‘Complete Path Hypothesis’, i.e. the tendency to linguistically express in the same clause both the source and goal of a translational motion, even in cases where one of the components is pleonastic (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 2001b).

Figures 3 and 4 schematically represent the relationship between the landmark and the postposition in these examples.

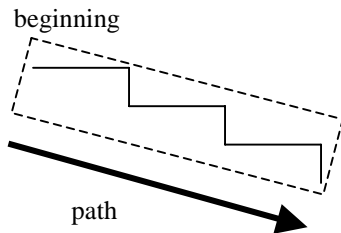


Figure 3: path in stairs

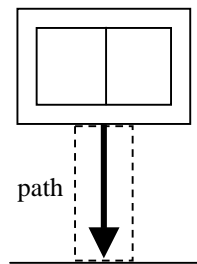


Figure 4: path in window

A possible solution for capturing these differences is the use of image schemas and the specification of the bindings that might occur among the roles of such image schemas. The locative case is characterised by the Boundary schema whose roles are Region A, Boundary, Region B. The allative and the ablative cases are characterised by the Source-Path-Goal schema whose roles are source, path, goal, and trajector. The goal is profiled in the former and the source is profiled in the latter. Apart from these two schemas, we also need the Trajector-Landmark image schema.

The crucial difference in these two constructions will be the following:

- Landmark  $\therefore$  Region A  $\therefore$  Path in (43) and (44)
- Landmark  $\therefore$  Source in (45)

Whereas in (43) and (44) the Landmark is bound to the Region A and to the Path, in (45) the Landmark is bound to the Source only.

A similar explanation can be applied to other postpositions like *goi* 'top'.

In the following table, I summarise the most important postpositions based on spatial nouns. In cases where the governed NP is singular inanimate, the genitive and determiner can be optionally left out.



Case	Postposition	Meaning	No case	Locative	Ablative	Allative
Gen	<b>Alde</b>	‘side’	Alde	Alde-an	Alde-tik	Alde-ra
Gen	<b>Ondo</b>	‘side’	----	Ondo-an	Ondo-tik	Ondo-ra
Gen	<b>Aldamen</b>	‘side’	----	Aldamen-ean	Aldamen-etik	Aldamene-ra
Gen	<b>Albo</b>	‘side’	----	Albo-an	Albo-tik	Albo-ra
Gen	<b>Azpi</b>	‘bottom’	----	Azpi-an	Azpi-tik	Azpi-ra
Gen	<b>Gain</b>	‘top’	----	Gain-ean	Gain-etik	Gain-era
Gen, Loc, Abl, Ø	<b>Goi</b>	‘top’	----	Goi-an	Goi-tik	Goi-ra
Gen, Loc, Abl, Ø	<b>Behe</b>	‘bottom’	----	Behe-an	Behe-tik	Behe-ra
Gen	<b>Aurre</b>	‘front’	----	Aurre-an	Aurre-tik	Aurre-ra
Gen	<b>Aintzi</b>	‘front’	----	Aintzi-ean	Aintzi-etik	Aintzi-era
Gen	<b>Atze</b>	‘back’	----	Atze-an	Atze-tik	Atze-ra
Gen	<b>Gibel</b>	‘back’	----	Gibel-ean	Gibel-etik	Gibel-era
Gen	<b>Oste</b>	‘back’	----	Oste-an	Oste-tik	Oste-ra
Gen	<b>Barru</b>	‘inside’	Barru	Barru-an	Barru-tik	Barru-ra
Gen	<b>Barne</b>	‘inside’	Barne	Barne-an	Barne-tik	Barne-ra
Gen	<b>Barren</b>	‘inside’	----	Barren-ean	Barren-etik	Barren-era
Gen	<b>Inguru</b>	‘vicinity’	Inguru	Inguru-an	Inguru-tik	Inguru-ra
Gen	<b>Pare</b>	‘side’	----	Pare-an	Pare-tik	Pare-ra
Gen	<b>Arte</b>	‘space between’	Arte	Arte-an	Arte-tik	Arte-ra
Abl	<b>At</b>	‘outside’	At	----	----	----
Abl	<b>Kanpo</b>	‘outside’	Kanpo	Kanpo-an	Kanpo-tik	Kanpo-ra
Gen	<b>Erdi</b>	‘middle’	----	Erdi-an	Erdi-tik	Erdi-ra
Gen	<b>Leku</b>	‘place’	----	Leku-an	Leku-tik	Leku-ra
Gen, all	<b>Buru</b>	‘centre’ ‘extremity’	----	Buru-an	Buru-tik	Buru-ra
Gen	<b>Pe</b>	‘lower part’	----	Pe-an	Pe-tik	Pe-ra
Gen	<b>Bizkar</b>	‘back’	----		Bizkar-(r)etik	
Gen	<b>Lepo</b>	‘neck’	----		Lepo-tik	

## Conclusions

In this paper I have presented an overview of Basque locational cases based on the descriptions provided by reference grammars of the Basque language. These are five: the locative, the ablative, the allative, the directional allative, and the goal allative. These cases have a series of different meanings mainly in the domains of ‘space’, ‘motion’, ‘time’, ‘manner’, ‘activity’, and ‘purpose’. Most of Basque descriptive grammars, when analysing the polysemy in these cases, merely list all of these senses without focusing on basic questions such as how and why these meanings are conveyed by these cases, what relationships these meanings hold among themselves.

The goal of this paper has been twofold. On the one hand, I have tried to critically summarise all the information I could gather on locational cases in order to provide a reference background for

future research in this area. On the other hand, I have put forward some basic ideas that in my opinion are fundamental for a better and more comprehensive understanding of Basque locational cases.

My main argument has been that the different meanings provided for each of the locational cases are not to be considered ‘different’ senses, but ‘motivated’ extensions of a prototypical sense in each case: ‘location in space’ in the locative; ‘source of motion’ in the ablative; ‘goal of motion’ in the allatives.

I have suggested that a possible way to formalise and explain the different conceptualisation of space and motion in locational cases is by means of ‘image schemas’ and by the profiling of relevant roles in each image schema. Therefore, the Boundary Schema with the profiled role Region A defines the locative; the Source Path Goal schema with the profiled role Source, the ablative; the SPG schema with the profiled role of Goal, the allative; the SPG schema with the profiled roles of Goal and Path (vector), the directional allative; and the SPG schema with the profiled roles of Goal and Path (limits-end), the goal allative.

Prototypical meanings and their extended meanings form a lexical network. These semantic extensions are linked to the prototypical sense by means of different cognitive devices, among them: ‘compositional polysemy’ and ‘metaphor’. Compositional polysemy explains the ablative ‘source’ and ‘through’ meanings, the locative ‘location’ and ‘into a location’ meanings. Metaphor is applied to the locative ‘location in time’ meaning, where the metaphor at play is LOCATION IN TIME IS LOCATION IN SPACE; to the ablative and the allative ‘period of time’ meaning, where the metaphor is A PERIOD OF TIME IS A COMPLETE PATH; and to the allative ‘purpose’ meaning, where the metaphor is PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS.

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