

Non-canonical Reflexive and Reciprocal Constructions in Basque

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Aims

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- To analyze **Basque non-canonical reflexives and reciprocals** in comparison to their canonical counterparts.
- To explore **how the reflexive and reciprocal interpretation arise** in Basque non-canonical reflexives and reciprocals.

Main claims

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- Basque non-canonical reflexives and reciprocals are **detransitivized**:
 - The only argument is **absolute** marked.
 - The **intransitive auxiliary** is selected.
 - BUT the only argument is interpreted as bearing **two thematic roles**.

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 - The **intransitive auxiliary** is selected.
 - BUT the only argument is interpreted as bearing **two thematic roles**.
- These constructions constitute a subtype of **verbal** reflexives and reciprocals.
- The **intransitive auxiliary** is encoding reflexivity and reciprocity.

Canonical Reflexives and Reciprocals in Basque

■ Transitive constructions involving **reflexive/reciprocal** anaphors:

- (1) a. Ni-k **neure burua** ikusi dut.
I-ERG my head(ABS) see.PFV (3ABS).have.1SGERG
'I have seen myself.' (lit. 'I have seen my head')
- b. Gu-k **elkar** ikusi dugu.
we-ERG REC(ABS) see.PFV (3ABS).have.1PLERG
'We have seen each other.'

→ Rebuschi (1988, 1992); Salaburu (1986); Etxepare (2003); Artiagoitia (2003).

Non-canonical Reflexives and Reciprocals

■ Detransitivized constructions **without** an anaphoric element:

(2) a. **Ni** ikusi naiz.
I(ABS) see.PFV 1SGABS.be
'I have seen myself.'

b. **Gu** ikusi gara.
we(ABS) see.PFV 1PLABS.be
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→ Etxepare (2003); Artiagoitia (2003); Bilbao (2022); Bilbao et. al (2022, 2024).

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- 3 The Role of the Intransitive Auxiliary
- 4 Summary

Outline of the talk

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1. Grammatical Reflexives and Reciprocals

Two primary **morphosyntactic** means of encoding reflexivity/reciprocity:

- Nominal strategies
- Verbal strategies

→ Faltz (1985); König & Kokutani (2006); Nedjalkov (2007); König & Gast (2008); Janic et al. (2023).

1.1 Nominal Reflexives and Reciprocals

■ Reflexive/reciprocal (**pro**)nominals:

- (3) a. I saw **myself**.
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b. We saw **each other**.

Canonical reflexives and reciprocals in Basque belong to this class.

1.2 Verbal Reflexives and Reciprocals

■ Reflexive/reciprocal **voice markers**:

- (4) a. kuta ngith pathath-**e**
 dog(ABS) that bite.RDP-REFL.NPST
 ‘That dog is biting himself.’ (Kuuk Thaayorre, Gaby 2023)
- b. Ali na Fatuma wa-na-pend-**an-a**
 Ali and Fatuma 3PL.SBJ-PRS-love-REC-ASP
 ‘Ali and Fatuma love each other.’ (Swahili, König and Kokutani 2006)

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- *Duplex voices* (Zúñiga & Kittilä 2019).

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Basque non-canonical reflexives and reciprocals **resemble verbal strategies** except for the **absence of voice markers**.

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2. Lexical Reflexives and Reciprocals

- A semantically restricted group of predicates can convey reflexivity or reciprocity **lexically**, without necessary grammatical marking (Haspelmath 2007):

→ **Inherently Reflexive and Reciprocal Verbs (IRRVs).**

Inherently Reflexive and Reciprocal Verbs

- **Inherently Reflexive** → grooming verbs (Haspelmath 2008):

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- **Uncoded** reflexives and reciprocals (Zúñiga & Kittilä 2019).

Lexical Reflexives and Reciprocals in Basque

■ IRRVs in Basque (Etxepare 2003; Bilbao 2022):

- (7) a. Ni **dutxatu** naiz.
 I(ABS) shower.PFV 1SGABS.be
 'I have showered.'
- b. Gu **ezkondu** gara.
 we(ABS) marry.PFV 1PLABS.be
 'We have married.'

Are Basque Non-canonical Reflexives and Reciprocals Lexical?

No, they are not:

- The verbs in non-canonical constructions **differ from IRRVs** in their compatibility with reflexive and reciprocal anaphors.

Compatibility with Anaphors

■ IRRVs disallow anaphors in Basque (Etxepare 2003):

- (8) a. *Nik **neure burua dutxatu** dut.
 I.ERG my head(ABS) shower.PFV (3ABS).have.1SGERG
 'I have showered myself.'
- b. *Gu **elkarr-ekin ezkondu** gara.
 we.ABS REC-COM marry.PFV 1PLABS.be
 'We have married.' (lit. 'We have married with each other.')

Compatibility with Anaphors

- Verbs that form non-canonical constructions **allow anaphors**:

- (9) a. Nik **neure burua** ikusi dut.
 I.ERG my head(ABS) see.PFV (3ABS).have.1SGERG
 'I have seen myself.' (lit. 'I have seen my head')
- b. Guk **elkar** ikusi dugu.
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This indicates that those verbs **do not convey reflexivity and reciprocity lexically**, but instead require grammatical encoding.

The Intransitive Auxiliary as Encoding Reflexivity and Reciprocity

Claims

- Basque non-canonical reflexives and reciprocals constitute a subtype of **verbal** reflexives and reciprocals.
 - They are instances of **duplex voices** (Zúñiga & Kittilä 2019): **detransitivized** constructions where the only argument has **two thematic roles**.

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- Reflexivity or reciprocity is encoded through the **intransitive auxiliary**, rather than through voice markers.
- This aligns with a **general dispreference in Basque** for encoding transitivity alternations using verbal voice markers.

Non-finite Clauses

- Non-finite clauses **lack auxiliaries**.
- In such clauses, non-inherently reflexive verbs cannot convey a reflexive interpretation without anaphors:

(10) a. [Anek **bere burua** ikus-tea] pozgarria da.
Ane.ERG her head.ABS see-NMLZ.ABS joyful (3ABS).be
'Ane seeing herself is joyful.'

b. [Ane **ikus-tea**] pozgarria da.
Ane.ABS see-NMLZ.ABS joyful (3ABS).be
'Seeing Ane has been joyful.'

Not: 'Ane seeing herself is joyful.'

→ see Bilbao (2022) for parallel examples of reciprocals.

Non-finite Clauses

- Note that IRVs can have a reflexive interpretation even in the absence of the auxiliary and the anaphor:

(11) [Ane **dutxa-tzea** pozgarria da.
 Ane.ABS shower-NMLZ.ABS joyful (3ABS).be
 ‘Ane showering is joyful.’ or ‘Showering Ane is joyful.’

→ see Bilbao (2022) for parallel examples of reciprocals.

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