

Ergative *need* not split: An exploration into the *TotalErg* hypothesis¹.

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1. Introduction: the TotalErg hypothesis.

Ergativity has received significant attention during the last decades in generative grammar; the number of languages and phenomena under scrutiny has increased, and as a consequence our knowledge about the properties and the range of variation in the ergative class has deepened considerably. As a result of this intensive focus, there has been an increasing trend towards convergence in the hypotheses as to what constitutes the core of ergativity. This convergence involves two different but related hypotheses, the sum of which I will name the *TotalErg* hypothesis:

(1) The *TotalErg* hypothesis:

(a) Ergative case is inherent.

(b) Ergativity does not split.

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The inherent ergative hypothesis has been increasingly gaining empirical support, and has been defended for a large variety of ergative languages (Levin 1983; Mahajan 1989; Johns 1992; Oyharçabal 1992; Woolford 1997, 2001, 2006; Holmer 1999; Legate 2002, 2008; Aldridge 2004, 2008; Stepanov 2004; Anand and Nevins 2006; Massam 1998, 2006; Laka 2006a, 2006b; Wiltschko 2008; among others, see Baker and Bobaljik (this volume), Legate (this volume) and Sheenan (this volume) for an overview). Aldridge (2008:987), following Legate (2002, 2006), claims that ergative morphology is in fact this very property: “Morphological ergativity is defined by the uniform assignment of inherent case to the subject by transitive *v*, as proposed by Legate (2002, 2008).” One widespread implementation of this generalization that I will assume in this chapter is to say that ergative case is associated to the specifier of (a subset of) little *vs* (see Sheenan in this volume); other mechanisms have also been proposed in the literature (see for instance the review by Polinsky and Preminger 2014). The inherent ergative hypothesis dissociates ergative case marking from structural Case licensing by Tense; ergative case is thus independent of Tense/finiteness, unlike nominative case. The hypothesis that ergative case is inherent predicts that internal arguments cannot bear ergative case, and therefore that raising to ergative cannot exist, a claim originally made by Marantz (2000).

To my knowledge, the earliest proposal that ergative case is inherent was put forth by Levin (1983) in order to provide an account of ergativity in Basque. Working within the Government and Binding Theory, Levin (1983) observed there was no evidence for a dissociation between theta roles and case morphology in Basque, the type of dissociation commonly found in nominative languages that justified the proposal of Case Theory as independent from Theta Theory (Chomsky 1981). The implementation proposed by Levin (1983) involved case assignment at D-structure, the level at which

thematic relations were established in that model. Levin's original proposal was not followed by subsequent generative studies on Basque in the eighties and nineties, probably because the assignment of case at D-structure represented too radical a departure from the standard GB claim that case was an S-structure licensing mechanism where Tense was crucially involved. Ortiz de Urbina (1989), for instance, argued that case in Basque was structural, and in particular that ergative was assigned to the specifier of Inflection by Tense. Many subsequent accounts have pursued the structural case hypothesis with variations (see, among many others, Fernández 1998; Laka 1993; more recently see Rezac, Albizu and Etxepare 2014, and Etxepare and Berro, this volume). The inherent ergative hypothesis for Basque has been defended by a minority of works in different forms, as an instance of lexical case by Oyharçabal, (1992), who combines it with a structural licensing as well, or as inherent case related to AspP/vP (Holmer, 1999; Laka, 2006b).

A second converging line of research on ergativity seeks to show that *split ergativity* is a misnomer (Laka 2006a, Coon 2010, 2013a, 2013b, Coon and Preminger this volume). Under this hypothesis, linguistic phenomena labeled *splits*, suggesting a change from an ergative pattern to a nominative one, follow naturally given the grammatical properties of the languages under study, within the boundaries of an ergative system as understood here. Ultimately, this approach should provide a parsimonious understanding of ergativity where apparent changes in case morphology are not due to pockets of lexical or grammatical exceptions, but rather, they result from unexceptional processes acting across different syntactic structures.

As Etxepare and Berro discuss in detail and with great nuance in this volume (Cf. their examples 18 to 23), and originally pointed out by Levin (1983), ergative marking in Basque is sensitive to the unaccusative/unergative contrast. This type of

ergative grammars have been argued to instantiate a variety of split ergativity triggered by the lexical semantics of the predicates involved, and this is why they have been called *Split-S* languages by Dixon (1979, 1994), for instance. The account defended in this chapter claims that *Split-S* languages like Basque are in fact split-less: only external arguments carry ergative case, and that suffices to account for the contrast without any need to resort to claiming that the case pattern splits from one mode (ergative) to another (nominative). This, in turn, entails that case morphology in grammars like Basque is determined within the ν P domain, because differences within the ν P domain entail differences in case marking. As Sheenan (this volume) and Etxepare and Berro (this volume) discuss at length, languages and language varieties make different cutting points as to what subset of arguments are treated as external, that is, as to what subset of little *vs* assign ergative case; in particular, the set of arguments need not be restricted to those entailing causation and can include experiencers and holders as well.

Another conclusion to be drawn at the end of the chapter is that agreement-based evidence is not necessarily valid to argue for case-related phenomena. I will claim that case and agreement are not always morphological reflexes of one syntactic operation; in particular, if ergative is inherent and ν P related, as several authors argue in this volume, it is doubtful that agreement data can bear directly on discussion on case and ergativity. This is particularly relevant in a language like Basque, where agreement morphology is only licensed in finite configurations, but case morphology is insensitive to finiteness. Therefore, I will argue, evidence based on agreement facts does not necessarily hinge on case.

This chapter presents an account of *behar* ‘need’ and associated syntactic configurations and predicates in Basque under the *TotalErg* hypothesis, which I argue provides a parsimonious account of the phenomena at stake. The interest of exploring

this area of Basque syntax is due to the fact that it has become the focus of the debate between structural vs. inherent approaches to Basque ergativity, given recent claims by Rezac et al (2014) that the behavior of this predicate provides crucial evidence in favor of a structural, T-dependent account of ergativity in this language.

I will therefore consider the syntax of *behar* ‘need’ in Basque and argue that the changes in case assignment related to sentences headed by *behar* can be accounted for within the *TotalErg* hypothesis, without resort to a structurally assigned ergative case. In fact, I will argue that *behar* ‘need’ and similarly behaving predicates in Basque offer more empirical evidence supporting (a) and (b), thus converging with several other cross-linguistic accounts of ergativity.

The chapter is structured as follows: in section 2, I briefly introduce the central phenomenon, seemingly involving a change in the case assigned to the subject of clauses when *behar* ‘need’ is introduced, and lay out the basics of the explanation of this contrast to be defended. In section 2, I discuss Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria (2012) and Harves and Kayne (2012), the two accounts upon which I base the derivation of the apparent split provoked by *need*. Although the accounts differ in certain details, the common ground they share suffices for the derivation I propose. In section 4, I discuss the categorical status of *behar*, and I also discuss the proposal in Rezac, Albizu and Etxepare (2014) that the presence of *behar* does indeed provoke a split and change the case assigning pattern of the clause. Finally, in section 5 I discuss the role that agreement based evidence has on discussions of morphological case; I argue that agreement and case are dissociated though related phenomena, and hence agreement is not direct evidence for case. Finally, in section 6 I sum up the proposal and its consequences for the *TotalErg* hypothesis.

2. *Ergative need in a nutshell.*

The central grammatical phenomenon under discussion in this chapter is illustrated by the pair of sentences in (3)²:

(2) a. zu Bilbo-ra joan zara
you Bilbao-to gone 2SG.be
'You have gone to Bilbao'

b. zu-k Bilbo-ra joan behar duzu
you-erg Bilbao-to gone need have.2SG
'You need to go to Bilbao'

The sentence in (2a) is headed by the unaccusative verb *joan* 'go' and the DP argument is case-marked absolutive (zero morphology). The introduction of *behar* 'need' in (2b) appears to change the case born by the DP, which is now marked ergative (morpheme *k*). I will argue that the differences in case marking in (2) are the necessary consequence of the syntactic structure of each sentence, in a way very similar to what happens in the progressive, as discussed in Laka (2006a): while (2a) is a monoclausal structure, (2b) is bi-clausal, and the main clause predicate introduces its own external argument. To this end, I will follow the accounts in Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria

² The contrast illustrated in (1) and discussed throughout the chapter does not hold for *behar* in western varieties, although it does for other predicates, like *nahi* 'want'. Thus, in western Basque, both (2a) and (2b) have absolutive subjects and intransitive auxiliaries. Western Basque appears to have grammaticalized *behar* as an element in the functional structure of the clause, in a pattern reminiscent of the grammaticalized *ari* progressive discussed in Laka (2007a, section 4.1) that lacked the case-changing phenomena generally induced by the progressive.

(2012) and Harves and Kayne (2012), who agree in claiming that the noun *behar* ‘need’ in sentence (2b) introduces an external argument of its own. If this is so, and if ergative case is inherently assigned to external arguments in Basque (Levin 1983, Oyharçabal 1992, Holmer 1999, Laka 2006b), then the external argument introduced by *behar* necessarily carries ergative case, and the contrast between (2a) and (2b) follows³.

If (2a) is monoclausal but (2b) is biclausal, then the absolutive DP in (2a) is the theme argument of *joan* ‘go’, but the ergative DP in (2b) is the external argument introduced by *behar* ‘need’. The key structural difference behind (2a, b) is schematized in (3a, b) respectively:

- (3) a. [theme go]
b. [ext.arg._i need [theme_i go]]

Given the structural differences in (2)-(3), it must be concluded that there is no split ergativity at play, no dissociation between semantic class and case morphology, and no change in the case assignment pattern from an ergative to a nominative one or *vice-versa*: the pronoun *zu* ‘you’ in (2b) carries ergative marking (-*k*) because it is an external argument, and it bears (zero) absolutive case in (2a) because it is an internal argument. The relation between the external and internal arguments in (2b) is one of control, as illustrated by the co-indexing in (3b), but it is possible to have referentially autonomous arguments in each clause (see later in the discussion, in example 11c). In sum, the general pattern behind the contrast between (2a) and (2b) is the same that has

³ For the purposes of exposition, I focus on *behar* ‘need’ but it must be noted that *nahi* ‘want’ and a cohort of other predicates have the same nature and behavior. See Etxepare and Berro (this volume, section 5.1), for a fuller list and a description the semantic classes they belong to.

been attested cross-linguistically in so-called *TAM Splits*, which have been derived by showing that the seemingly split structures involve different complementation configurations which are at the base of the morphological changes observed (Laka 2006a, Coon 2010, 2013a, 2013b, Coon and Preminger this volume).

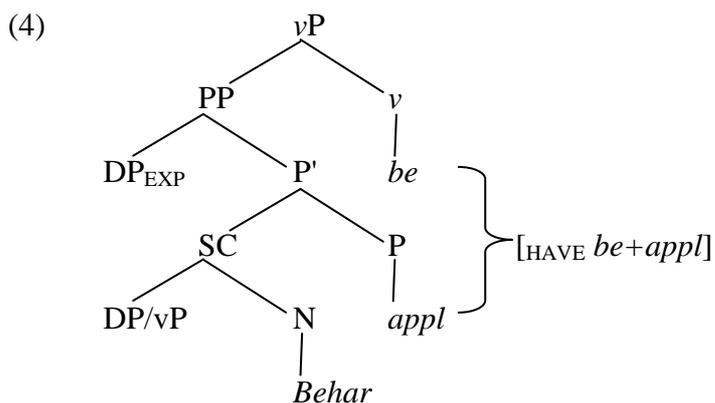
3. *Two ways to derive transitive need from a noun.*

I will now discuss in greater detail the account in Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria (2012) and compare it to that of Harves and Kayne (2012), showing that both accounts provide the necessary elements to derive the contrast in (2) within the tenets of *TotalErg*.

Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria (2012) put forth an account of *behar* and associated syntactic configurations under the hypothesis that there is only one lexical entry for *behar*: it is always a noun. Since I will follow the basic structure provided by their account and focus on its consequences for the distribution and nature of morphological case in Basque and ergative morphology at large, I will lay it out and compare it to the cross-linguistic account of the syntax of transitive *need* defended by Harves and Kayne (2012)⁴, which also shares the initial hypothesis that transitive *need* originates as a noun. As we will see, the main difference between these two approaches involves the behavior of this noun during the derivation: whereas in Harves and Kayne (2012) the noun is an argument and incorporates into the verb *have*, in Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria (2012) it is a predicate and it does not incorporate. This difference, in turn, does not directly bear on the discussion in this chapter, as we will see, because both accounts correctly predict that constructions with *behar* will necessarily yield ergative case marked external arguments given the *TotalErg* hypothesis.

⁴ Earlier versions of these proposals are found in Etxepare & Uribe-Etxebarria (2010) and in Harves (2008).

Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria (2012) specifically discuss the syntactic structure associated with *behar* ‘need’ in sentences like (2a, b); they argue that *behar* is a noun acting as a predicate in a small clause [_{SC} [DP/vP] *behar*] where it can combine either with a DP constituent (see example 10a for an illustration) or a vP constituent (see example 10b for an illustration). In this analysis, the ‘needer’, which the authors conceive as an experiencer, and Etxepare and Berro (this volume) categorize as a holder, is an external argument introduced in the specifier of an applicative head P that combines with the small clause, [_{PP} *experiencer* P [SC]] and introduces the experiencer of the need, that is, the external argument, in its specifier position.



This PP, in turn, combines with the copula yielding [_{vP} *be* [PP]]. The incorporation of the applicative P onto *be* yields the verb *have* (following Freeze 1992, Kayne 1993). Hence, (2a, b) are transitive due to the incorporation of P, the head that introduces the experiencer argument in its specifier (see also the structural descriptions in 5c, d).

The account in Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria (2012) shares several basic features with the one in Harves and Kayne (2012), who put forth a cross-linguistic account of transitive *need* and relate it to auxiliary selection: languages with transitive

need are necessarily languages with transitive *have*. According to Harves and Kayne (2012), transitive *need* emerges from the incorporation of the noun *need* onto the verb *have*: [_{VP} have+need_i [_{NP} e_i [DP]]]. As the authors note, this derivation is compatible with the decompositional approach to *have* resulting from incorporation of P onto *be* (Freeze 1992 and Kayne 1993). Harves and Kayne (2012) explicitly include Basque within the group of languages where noun incorporation onto *have* yields transitive *need*, though they do not enter into the specifics of its syntax. Both accounts take as their starting assumption that *behar* ‘need’ is a noun; the difference between the two proposals lies in the syntactic configuration *behar* enters into, which in turn bears on whether this element incorporates into *have* or not.

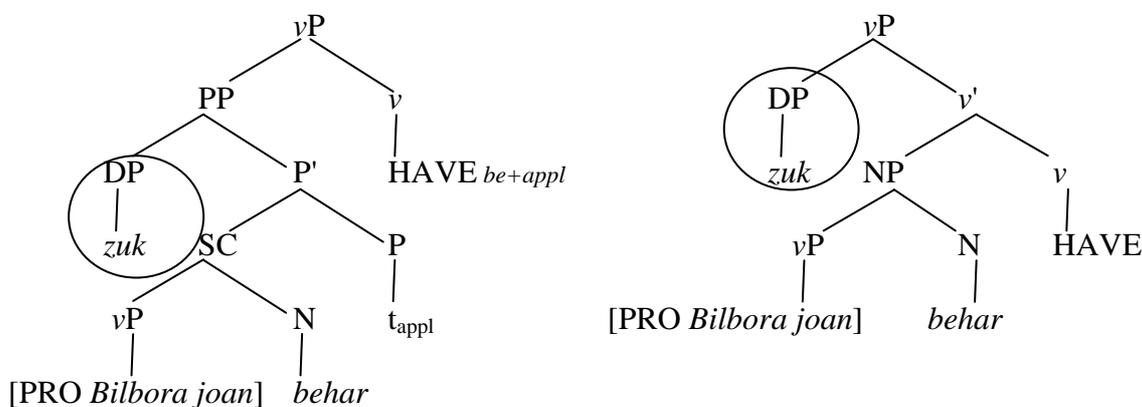
In Harves and Kayne (2012), transitive *need* results from noun incorporation (Baker 1988), and the constituent where *need* and its internal argument combine is a NP (see the structural description in 5a). The incorporated noun does not require case, and the accusative case available for assignment from *have* can license the complement DP of the incorporated noun (5b).

- (5) a. [_{VP} have [_{NP} need [DP]]
b. [_{VP} have+need_i [_{NP} e_i [DP]]
c. be [_{PP} experiencer P [_{SC}[DP/vP] *behar*]]
d. [[_{have}be+P_i] [_{PP} experiencer e_i [_{SC}[DP/vP] *behar*]]

In Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria (2012), *behar* is also a noun, but it acts as a predicate in a small clause. Therefore, it is not an argument and it does not require case (4), (5c), which in turn makes noun incorporation unnecessary (5d).

The common ground shared by Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria (2012) and Harves and Kayne (2012) suffices to account for the transitive behavior of *behar* and its ergative marked external argument within the boundaries of *TotalErg* and without appeal to any exceptional or language-particular grammatical mechanism. Both accounts converge in arguing that the predicate structure of *behar/need* necessarily involves the introduction of an external argument independently of the structure of the complement (in the case of Harves and Kayne 2012) or sister constituent (in the case of Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria 2012) of the argument (in the case of Harves and Kayne 2012) or predicate (in the case of Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria 2012) of *behar/need*. We compare the structural descriptions of a sentence like (2b) as argued for by each account:

- (6) a. Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria (2012) b. Harves and Kayne (2012)



As can be seen in the structural representations in (6), both accounts provide a specifier position within the vP domain where the external argument of *behar/need* is introduced. Given the inherent ergative hypothesis, that configuration requires the assignment of ergative case. Therefore, the syntax of *behar* as conceived by these

accounts is compatible with the hypothesis that ergative case is inherently assigned to external arguments at the *vP* level, in accordance with the *TotalErg* hypothesis.

4. *Is Basque behar a noun or a raising modal?*

I will now discuss the categorical status of *behar*, which has been the subject of discussion in the recent literature. Two main hypotheses have been defended regarding the syntactic status of this element: (a) it is a lexical category, either a noun or a verb; (b) it is a functional category, a raising modal belonging in the inflectional structure of the sentence. Each hypothesis signals a different departure point and yields very different accounts; this is why it is important to consider what independent evidence can be found in support of one or the other. I will argue there is substantial independent evidence for a noun *behar* in Basque (as hypothesized by Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria 2012), and that the evidence in favor of the view that there is also a raising modal *behar* (as hypothesized by Rezac, Albizu and Etxepare 2014) is weaker.

The more detailed traditional descriptions of Basque consider *behar* to be a lexical element, either a noun or a verb. De Rijk (2007:14.5) and Michelena (1990) extensively discuss the similarities and differences between *behar* the noun and *behar* the transitive verb, and the different types of constructions they can enter into. The generative literature on *behar*, for the most part, agrees with traditional descriptions of the language, and takes it to be a lexical category, a noun in some constructions and a verb in others, akin to English *need*.

Proposals within generative grammar, like Goenaga (1985), and Ormazabal (1991) provide restructuring accounts of bi-clausal *behar* structures like (2b), and start from the assumption that in those structures *behar* is a verb. Goenaga (2006) discusses the categorical status of *behar* and concludes that it is underdetermined between a noun

and an adjective. Ortiz de Urbina (2003:300) refers to *behar* as a ‘semi auxiliary’ verb, because ‘in some of their usages, seem to be ‘transparent’ with respect to their subordinate clausal complements, so that clause union effects may be perceived.’ Haddican (2004) argues that *behar* is a ‘quasi-functional’ verb in the sense of Cardinaletti and Shlonsky (2004): it is a verb because it drives the selection of the auxiliary, but it is like a functional element because it is transparent to agreement with embedded arguments (clitic climbing). When considering the full array of constructions *behar* can enter into, some accounts have to assume that there is more than one *behar* in the mental lexicon of Basque speakers, each belonging to a different syntactic category. I will first consider the case of *behar* as a noun.

There is agreement in the literature regarding the existence of a noun *behar* ‘need’ in the Basque lexicon (Michelena, 1990). As a common noun, *behar* can head argument DPs and behave as a nominal argument, as shown in (7)⁵:

- (7) a. zu-k [DP<sub>[NP[PPliburu bat-en] beharr]a] duzu
You-erg book one-gen need-Det have.2G
‘you have the need of one/a book’</sub>
- b. zu-k_i [DP<sub>[NP[PPPRO_i liburu bat irakur-tze-ko] beharr]a] duzu
you-erg_i PRO_i book one read-nom-gen need-Det have.2SG
‘you have the need to read one/a book’</sub>

The examples (7a) and (7b) only differ in the type of complement the noun *behar* ‘need’ takes. In (7a), the complement of *behar* is a genitive PP containing the DP

⁵ The change from a simple *r* in *behar* to a double *rr* in *beharra* is the orthographic reflex of the fact that in word final position the trill (grapheme *rr*) is neutralized (grapheme *r*).

liburu bat ‘one/a book’; in (7b) the complement is also a genitive PP containing a nominalized nonfinite clause *liburu bat irakurtzeko* ‘to read one/a book’. As shown in (8), these DP arguments headed by the noun *behar* ‘need’ behave like any other DP argument; they carry a determiner (*-a* in the examples), and they bear ergative (8a, b), or dative case (8c, d) when required:

- (8) a. [DP[NP[PPliburu bat-en] beharr]a]k ez du gure ikerketa geldituko
 book one-gen need-Det-erg not have.3SG our research.Det stop.asp
 ‘the need of one/a book will not stop our research’
- b. [DP[NP[PPPRO_{arb} liburua irakur-tze-ko] beharr]a]k ez du gure ikerketa geldituko
 book.Det read-nom-gen need-Det-erg not have.3SG our research.Det stop.asp
 ‘the need to read one/a book will not stop our research’
- c. egoera hau [DP[NP[PPliburu bat-en] beharr]a]ri zor zaio
 situation this book one-gen need-Det-Dat owe be.3SG.3SG
 ‘This situation is due (Lit:owes) to the need of a book’
- d. egoera hau [DP[NP[PPPRO_{arb} liburu bat irakur-tze-ko] beharr]a]ri zor zaio
 situation this PRO_{arb} book one read-nom-gen need-Det-Dat owe be.3SG.3SG
 ‘This situation is due (Lit:owes) to the need to read a book’

De Rijk (2007), Michelena (1990), Goenaga (2006) and Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria (2012) among others, offer a wide variety of examples and evidence supporting the existence of a noun *behar*, including instances like (9a), where *behar* combines with a locative postposition, (9b) where it is modified by an adjective, or (9c) where it bears the partitive determiner, as shown in these examples:

- (9) a. ni [ppzu-re laguntza-ren beharr-ean] nago
I.abs you-gen help-gen need-in be/loc.1SG
'I am in need of your help'
- b. ni-k [DPzu-re laguntza-ren behar gorria] dut
I-erg you-gen help-gen need red have.1SG
'Lit: I have a red need of your help'
'I am in dire need of your help'
- c. ni-k ez dut [DPzu-re laguntza-ren beharr-ik]
I-erg not have.1SG you-gen help-gen need-part
'I do not have any need of your help'

I therefore take it as an uncontroversial fact that there is a noun *behar* 'need' in the Basque lexicon. This noun can take either DPs or non-finite clauses as complements, as shown in (7), (8), and (9). A full account of *behar* that postulates only one lexical entry is, all other things equal, preferable to an alternative account postulating various homophonous lexical entries. This is what Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria (2012) set out to do: they provide a full account of *behar* and associated syntactic structures by postulating a single lexical entry *behar_N*.

In the context of advocating for a structural assignment of ergative case in Basque, Rezac, Albizu and Etxepare (2014) discuss cases like (2b), which they refer to as the 'INF+*behar* construction'. Their hypothesis is that, in this particular construction, *behar* is a raising modal akin to English *must*. They follow the account in Wurmbrand (1999) who argued that modal verbs like English *must* are raising predicates involving syntactic movement, and not control structures. Hence, according to Rezac et al. (2014), the contrast in (2) involves the same thematic array of arguments: the

unaccusative verb *joan* ‘go’ is the only thematic predicate in both (2a) and (2b), and the argument *zu* ‘you’ is a theme in both sentences, as shown in the derivations (10a) and (10b) respectively (adapted from Rezac et al 2014:1291, example 22):

- (10) a. [TP [DP *zu*_i] ... [vP *t*_i [PP *Bilbora*] [_v*joan*] ... *zara*]
b. [TP [DP *zuk*_i] ... [[vP *t*_i [PP *Bilbora*] [_v*joan*] ...] *behar*] *duzu*]

The presence of the modal element *behar* in (10b) triggers a change in the case assigned to the raised argument, which is now assigned ergative case by Tense. According to Rezac et al. (2014), this account of the contrast in (2) involving raising to ergative provides crucial evidence that ergative case is structural (Tense-dependent) and not inherent (vP-dependent) in Basque.

I will argue that this raising account requires a more complex lexicon with different homophonous entries and the deployment of language-particular or exceptional mechanisms that burden our theory of grammar, and therefore, that the proposal in Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria (2012), combined with the TotalErg hypothesis, is both empirically and theoretically preferable.

Rezac et al. (2014) do not discuss the lexical (nominal or verbal) *behar* in (2a); unlike Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria (2012), Rezac et al. (2014) consider only cases like (2b), restricting their account to that type of construction, which they distinctly label as INF+*behar*. However, they do not discuss other syntactic configurations *behar* enters into, like the ones shown and discussed in (7), (8), (9), or how their account of configurations like (2b) relate to them. Consider the following examples involving the predicate *behar* in (11):

- (11) a. Zu-k liburu-a behar duzu
you-erg book-the need have.2SG
'You need the book'
- b. Zu-k liburu-a irakurri behar duzu
You-erg book-the read need have.2SG
'You need to read the book'
- c. Ni-k zu-k liburu-a irakur-tzea behar dut
I-erg you-erg book-the read-inf need have.1SG
'I need you to read the book'

The proposal in Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria (2012) with *behar* as a noun, offers a unified explanation for the sentences in (11), which differ only in the type of constituent the predicate noun *behar* combines with in the small clause it heads: in (11a) it combines with a DP, in (11b) it combines with a vP, and in (11c) it combines with an AspP, as schematically shown in (12):

- (12) a. be [_{PP} DP P [_{SC} [DP] *behar*]]
b. be [_{PP} DP P [_{SC} [vP] *behar*]]
c. be [_{PP} DP P [_{SC} [AspP] *behar*]]

The raising analysis of INF+*behar* (the construction it sets out to account for is illustrated in example 11b) begs the question of how it relates to cases where *behar* acts as a transitive predicate (11a, 12a), or cases where *behar* takes non-control infinitival complements whose external argument is not co referential with the one in the finite main clause (11c, 12c). A raising account of *behar* for (11b) is also not

straightforwardly compatible with the possibility of having non-finite clauses headed by *behar*, which is possible in Basque, as shown in (13):

- (13) normala da [ni-k liburu-a berriz irakurri *behar* iza-te]a]
normal is [I-erg book-the again read need be-nom]Det]
'it is normal for me to need to/have to read the book again'
(Cf. English *it is normal for me to must read the book again)

An account of (11b) in terms of a raising modal structure entails that (11a, c) and (13) involve at least one different lexical entry for *behar* which is homophonous with the raising modal deployed in INF+*behar* constructions as analyzed by Rezac et al. (2014). However, a nominal account of *behar* like the one put forth by Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria (2012) or Harves and Kayne (2012) does not need to postulate multiple homophonous lexical entries for *behar*; it can provide a full account of its syntax taking it to be a single lexical element of category N that enters into various syntactic combinations yielding the large array of constructions this nominal element can enter into, either as a predicate or as an argument.

Rezac et al. (2014) argue that the *behar*+INF construction provides evidence that ergative is not inherently assigned in Basque: "Like English INF + *must*, Basque INF + *behar* proves to be a raising construction, but raising confers ergativity on the raisee even if it would otherwise be absolutive. Thus ergativity is again dissociated from thematic relations." (Rezac et al. 2014:1289) But if *behar* in (2b, 11b) is a raising modal with no external thematic role to assign, the assignment of ergative case to the subject is puzzling, because, as the authors acknowledge, other raising predicates like the copular verbs *izan* 'be(individual level)' *egon* 'be(stage level)' do not assign ergative to their

subjects (as shown in 11a, and in 12b,d); they have absolutive subjects (as shown in 11a, and in 12a,c) (see Zabala 2003 for an extensive study of copular constructions in Basque). That is, if ergative case is structurally assigned in Basque by Tense, then all raising configurations should yield the same case for the raised subject. However, this is not so, as shown by the following examples of copular sentences:

- (14) a. Zu ikaslea zara
You student be.2SG
'You are a student'
- b. *zu-k ikaslea zara
you-erg student be.2SG
- c. Gu Bilbon gaude
we Bilbao-in are.1PL
'we are in Bilbao'
- d. *Gu-k Bilbon gaude
we-erg Bilbao-in are.1PL
'we are in Bilbao'

Rezac et al. (2014) do not discuss the reason why structures with *behar* assign ergative case to the raised argument. This issue is of significant relevance in a discussion on ergativity, because accepting that structures with *behar* + *INF* involve raising entails accepting that Basque stands out as a grammar involving 'raising-to-ergative', a type of grammatical process that has been widely argued not to be possible in human language (Marantz 2000; Woolford 2006; Legate 2008, 2012; Sheenan this volume, among others), and moreover, the account bears the burden of explaining why

only some cases of raising in Basque yield this exceptional effect. Given the highly exceptional status of raising-to-ergative in grammatical theory, it is necessary to ascertain that other explanatory trails cannot be more successfully tread. The argument put forth in this chapter is that there is no need to postulate such an exceptional mechanism as raising to ergative to understand the syntax of *behar* and ergativity in Basque.

By extension, a non-raising account of *behar* like that put forth by Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria (2012) is preferable both on empirical as well as theoretical grounds, because of the following reasons: (a) it does not need to postulate more than one lexical entry for *behar*, revealed to be always a noun; (b) it does not need to postulate raising to ergative; (c) it does not need to postulate language particular exceptional processes to ensure that some raising structures will yield absolutive subjects while others yield ergative subjects; (d) it does not need to postulate invisible Tense projections in non-finite clauses like (9c) where ergative case is perfectly grammatical; (e) it is compatible with the *TotalErg* hypothesis: inherent ergative and no splits.

In contrast, the account in Rezac et al. (2014) must postulate at least two different lexical/categorical entries for *behar*: if there is a functional category *behar* akin to English ‘must’, then there must also be at least a lexical noun *behar* in order to account for cases where *behar* is clearly akin to the English noun ‘need’. It must conclude that raising to ergative is a possibility for Basque grammar, even though the reason why the raised argument is assigned ergative is not motivated, and by extension it yields a less constrained theory of grammar. The raising account relies on Tense as the sole assigner of ergative case, and in principle it begs the question of how to account for cases like (13), where ergative is possible in nonfinite and agreement less clauses. Finally, the raising account of *behar/need* yields a highly exceptional and very

language-specific picture of Basque that sets it apart from converging accounts of ergativity, and burdens our theory of grammar.

5. *Agreement issues: little to do with case.*

In this section, I briefly discuss the agreement morphology patterns generated by structures with *behar*. I argue that agreement morphology is dissociated from case morphology in Basque, a dissociation that is to be expected if ergative case is inherent and associated to ν P configurations. In order to do that, I will first lay out some basic facts of agreement in Basque (see also Etxepare and Berro in this volume for a fuller view). As is well-known, Basque has pluripersonal agreement (ergative, dative and absolutive arguments must obligatorily agree with verbal inflection), and agreement morphology, unlike case morphology, surfaces only in finite clauses, as shown in (15):

- (15) a. ni-k zu-ri liburua eman dizut
I-erg you-dat book.abs given 3sg.have.you.me
'I have given the book to you'
- b. [ni-k zu-ri liburua ema-te-a] ezinezkoa da
I-erg you-dat book.abs give-nom-D impossible is
'It is impossible for me to give you the book'
(Lit: *it is impossible I you the book give)

Both (15a) and (15b) contain case marked DPs, but only the finite clause (15a) has agreement morphology referencing the case marked DPs. In (15b), the clause containing the arguments is not finite and there is no agreement morphology in the nominalized verbal form *ematea* 'to give'; the main clause contains an inflected

auxiliary that does not agree with the DPs from the embedded clause. This contrast can straightforwardly be captured if case and agreement morphology are not manifestations of the same licensing condition, as claimed in Laka (2006b). Given a dissociation between case and agreement morphology, it is not surprising that children display different acquisition stages for case and agreement morphology (Ezeizabarrena, 1996), that speakers suffering agrammatism produce many agreement errors but few case-morphology errors (Laka and Erriondo Korostola, 2001), or that proficient non-native speakers of Basque who are native speakers of Spanish generate different electrophysiological components from native speakers when processing ergative case morphology, but not when processing ergative or absolutive agreement morphology (Zawiszewski, Gutierrez, Fernández and Laka 2011, Zawiszewski this volume).

Regarding the agreement patterns associated with *behar*, it has been widely noted in the literature that control configurations like (11b) above, repeated here as (17a) behave like clitic climbing structures in Romance, because the matrix auxiliary obligatorily agrees with the object inside the embedded clause (17b):

(16) a. Zu-k liburu-a irakurri behar du-zu

You-erg book-the read need have-2SG

‘You need to read the book’

b. Zu-k liburu-ak irakurri behar d-it-u-zu

You-erg book-the_{pl} read need 3PL-have-2SG

‘You need to read the books’

c. *Zu-k liburu-ak irakurri behar d-u-zu

You-erg book-the_{pl} read need have-2SG

(You need to read the books)

These agreement patterns have often been taken as direct evidence for case assignment, for instance by Etxepare and Uribe -Etxebarria (2012), who argue as follows: “Recall that at the beginning of this section we have shown that the matrix auxiliary has to display agreement with all the arguments of the embedded predicate. If this is correct, it suggests that, in contrast with other non-finite constructions, the embedded arguments cannot check their Case and agreement features within the non-finite clause and must look at the matrix domain to do it.” I depart from the assumption that case and agreement morphology necessarily reflect the externalization of a single grammatical process (Chomsky 2000), and follow instead the hypothesis that, at least in ergative languages, they are separate grammatical mechanisms. Note that this is a necessary consequence of the hypothesis that ergative is inherent, assigned within the *vP* domain.

Dissociating case from agreement provides a way of accounting for the numerous mismatches between case and agreement morphology attested cross-linguistically, many of which involve ergative languages, like Warlpiri or Chukchi, with both ergative-absolutive case morphology and nominative-accusative agreement (Dixon 1994), the Spurious Antipassive in Chukchi (Bobaljik and Branigan 2006), or Ergative Displacement in Basque (Laka 1988, 1993), where agreement markers are dissociated from case morphology. This dissociation also provides a straightforward path to explain data from nonfinite environments where ergative case occurs freely in the absence of agreement and finiteness, like the examples provided in (11c), (13), (15b).

6. *Discussion: no need to split.*

The proposal in this chapter attempts to advance our understanding of ergativity with minimal appeal to language-particular exceptions, and assuming that ergativity is a uniform property manifested in some human grammars, a position that I have named the *TotalErg* hypothesis, bringing together two distinct but related hypotheses: (a) ergative case is inherent: its morphology signals external arguments associated to the specifier of the ν P domain; (b) ergativity is a uniform grammatical phenomenon and it does not split; there are no nominative ruptures within ergative grammars.

The *TotalErg* hypothesis refers to morphological case, and not to abstract Case, the overt NP licensing condition postulated in Government and Binding and the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1981, 1995, 2000). As discussed in Bobaljik and Wurmbrand (2008) and Polinsky and Preminger (2014), morphological and abstract case were originally thought to be directly related, but this relation has become increasingly more tenuous in contemporary studies. I subscribe the suggestion in Bobaljik and Wurmbrand (2008) that once the dissociation of abstract Case and morphological case is in place, "...this further level of abstraction leaves open the possibility that ergativity is best described as a morphological phenomenon, lying squarely outside the domain of Case Theory, and masking a (more) uniform syntax."

Bobaljik and Wurmbrand (2008) also note, quoting Chomsky (2000), that the relevance of abstract/structural case has been significantly reduced in Minimalism, given the feature-matching view of probe-goal relations. "The question arises still more sharply if matching is just identity, so that Case can never be attracted; operations are not induced by Case-checking requirements. (Chomsky 2000: 127)." Within this view of what triggers grammatical operations, agreement (a ϕ feature identity match) can be more adequately thought of as the externalization of finiteness-dependent operations

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than case. Morphological case, in turn, need not be a reflex of finiteness-dependent operations, but it can signal vP related configurations, as it does in the case of ergative languages, if the approach defended here is on the right track.

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