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PART III

## **Animacy and case**



# Animacy and spatial cases

## Typological tendencies, and the case of Basque

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In the expression of spatial relationships, it is cross-linguistically common that human or animate nouns have particularities that distinguish them from other nouns. After presenting cross-linguistic data illustrating some tendencies observed in the behavior of human or animate nouns in spatial orienter function, this paper examines the contribution of Basque data to this question.

### 1. Introduction

In this paper, the term *case* is taken in its traditional meaning of inflectional category-system (and the individual categories or values of that system) expressing dependency relations involving NPs.<sup>1</sup> Case affixes are not always easy to distinguish from adpositions fulfilling a similar function, but in some way or other a distinction between more or less integrated or more or less heavy ways of marking dependency relations involving NPs is crucial to the question addressed in this paper.

A spatial relation involves two percepts, a *Figure* (or *Theme*, or *Trajector*) and an *Orienter* (or *Ground*, or *Location*, or *Landmark*), the Figure being perceived as located or in motion relative to the Orienter.<sup>2</sup>

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1. For a discussion of the various extensions of the term *case* encountered in the literature, see Haspelmath (2008).

2. Creissels (2008) provides a brief introduction to the question of spatial cases in the languages of the world. For a general approach to the study of the linguistic expression of spatial relations, see also e.g. Jackendoff (1983), Langacker (1987), Jackendoff & Landau (1992), Svorou (1994), Pederson (1995), Pederson et al. (1998), Talmy (2000). Shay & Seibert (2003) provides a collection of papers exploring the variety of the linguistic means of expressing spatial relations in typologically diverse languages.

A spatial case is an inflected form of nouns or NPs distinct from the absolute form available for the extra-syntactic function of pure designation, and apt to fulfill one of the following functions without the addition of an adposition:<sup>3</sup>

- non-verbal predicate, or predicative complement of a copula, specifying the location of an entity,
- adjunct specifying the location of an event,
- argument of motion verbs specifying the source, path, or destination of the movement.

Spatial cases may either encode directionality distinctions only (*location* vs. *source of movement* vs. *destination of movement* vs. *path*), or combine directionality distinctions with configuration distinctions (i.e. distinctions of the type expressed by the choice between *in*, *on*, *at*, *behind*, *under*, etc. in English). Basque and Turkish are typical examples of languages with spatial cases expressing directionality only. In such languages, directionality is encoded by means of obligatory inflectional markers, whereas the specification of spatial configurations requires the use of adpositions or locational nouns.

Two semantic classes of nouns frequently have particularities in relation with spatial cases: geographical names, and nouns referring to humans.<sup>4</sup> Geographical names often have a lighter spatial marking than most other nouns, and tend to be more conservative in evolutions affecting the expression of spatial relations. This is quite obviously the consequence of their predisposition to represent the reference point in a spatial relation, and of the frequency of their use as spatial complements or adjuncts. In Latin, the nouns that had a locative form distinct from the ablative and/or maintained spatial uses of prepositionless ablative and prepositionless accusative were mainly town names. In Hungarian, some town names maintain an ancient locative ending *-ett/ött/ott* that has been eliminated from regular noun inflection.<sup>5</sup> In Tswana, as illustrated by (1), names of towns or countries have no locative form, and occur in the absolute form in contexts in which, with very few exceptions, other nouns must take a locative affix.<sup>6</sup>

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3. The fully productive use of the absolute form of nouns in locative function without the addition of an adposition, although extremely rare, is attested in Ardeşen Laz (Kutscher 2001).

4. Common nouns characterizable as “natural locations” (such as *house*, or *village*) often show the same tendencies as geographical names with respect to the expression of spatial relations.

5. This ancient locative suffix also subsists in the inflection of spatial postpositions.

6. In Tswana, the expression of spatial relationships involves prepositions and locative affixes. Prepositions are always optional, and their presence entirely depends on the speaker’s decision to specify the distinctions they express. By contrast, locative affixes are obligatory

- (1) Tswana (Niger-Congo (Bantu); Denis Creissels' field notes)
- a. *Ke ya (ko) Gaborone.*  
1SG go:PRS at/to Gaborone  
'I am going to Gaborone.'
  - b. *Ke ya (ko) toropo-ng.*  
1SG go:PRS at/to town-LOC  
'I am going to the town.'
  - c. \**Ke ya (ko) Gaborone-ng.*  
1SG go:PRS at/to Gaborone-LOC
  - d. \**Ke ya (ko) toropo.*  
1SG go:PRS at/to town

Nouns referring to humans, or more generally to animate beings, show exactly the opposite tendencies, and this will constitute the main topic of this paper. After an overview of the tendencies observed cross-linguistically in the behavior of human nouns in the expression of spatial relationships, we will examine the contribution of Basque data to this question.

The first part of our paper (Sections 2 & 3) illustrates and discusses two cross-linguistic tendencies of human nouns in the expression of spatial relations:

- In the expression of spatial configurations with the usual residence of an individual in orienter function, many languages use constructions in which the NP referring to the person in question is not transparently constructed as the genitive dependent of a noun referring to his/her residence (Section 2).
- In many languages, the expression of spatial configurations is characterized by a relationship between semantic and formal markedness that manifests itself by the incompatibility of human nouns with a relatively light spatial marking found with other semantic types of nouns (Section 3).

The second part of the paper (Sections 4 to 7) is devoted to Basque. This language provides a typical illustration of the tendency to reserve a heavier spatial marking for human nouns, and also suggests the possibility of a relationship between animacy and allative-locative-ablative asymmetries, a question which does not seem to have been raised so far. After describing the present situation in the standard language (Section 4), we examine dialectal and diachronic data (Sections 5 & 6) with a view to discussing possible evolutions that could have led to the present situation (Section 7).

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with most common nouns. Note that neither prepositions nor locative affixes specify the distinction between static location, movement from a source and movement towards a goal.

## 2. Two particularities of humans or animates in the conceptualization and expression of spatial relationships

### 2.1 Particularities in the concrete vs. metaphorical uses of some spatial markers

In addition to their concrete spatial uses, spatial markers may have uses analyzable as metaphorical extensions of their concrete spatial meaning, and such uses may be favored by the nature of the entities involved.

In particular, the use of animate beings as orienters with reference to configurations conceptualized as proximity (as in English *Sit beside me!*) or contact (as in English *Put a blanket on the child!*) is not problematic. By contrast, animate beings are not spontaneously perceived as having an interior available as a possible location for other entities. In the expression of concrete spatial relationships involving the inside part of an animate being, the use of nouns or pronouns referring to the individual is avoided, and formulations using body part nouns are preferred. For example, *I have a thorn in my foot* sounds much more natural than *I have a thorn in me*.

This is probably the reason why, cross-linguistically, the combination of human (and more generally, animate) nouns with spatial markers primarily used to encode interiority tends to be reserved for metaphorical uses, as in English *There was no strength in him*. In such uses, the noun refers to the set of abstract features that constitute the personality of an individual, rather than to the individual as a concrete entity occupying a given portion of space.

### 2.2 Orientation in relation to a person vs. orientation in relation to a person's usual residence

A characteristic common to humans and some animal species is the existence of places that can be characterized as the usual residence of individuals: houses, tents, nests, dens, etc. It is always possible to express spatial relationships involving the usual residence of an individual in orienter function by means of a genitive construction, as in English *I am going to [my sister's house]*. However, in many languages, at least with humans, this is not the usual way to encode spatial configurations with an individual's residence in orienter function. Languages tend to treat this kind of spatial configuration by means of constructions in which the NP referring to the person in question is not transparently constructed as the genitive dependent of a noun referring to his/her residence.

#### 2.2.1 *Conventionalized ellipsis in the expression of orientation with respect to a person's usual residence*

A relatively common strategy is the use of a conventionalized elliptical construction, as in English *I am going to my sister's*. In such constructions, the identification of the

missing head of the genitive construction departs from the general rule according to which an antecedent must be retrieved from the context. In the presence of a human genitive, a special rule allows identifying the missing head of an NP in spatial argument or adjunct function to the residence of the referent of the genitive.

### 2.2.2 *Specialized adpositions possibly resulting from the grammaticalization of nouns meaning 'house'*

Languages may also have synchronically opaque adpositions specifically encoding orientation in relation to a person's usual residence. A plausible source of such adpositions is the grammaticalization of constructions in which, originally, the NP referring to the person was the genitive dependent of the noun referring to his/her residence, and this grammaticalization path is attested in the history of Romance languages. For example, French has a preposition *chez* 'at someone's house, home' resulting from the reanalysis of Old French *chiese* 'house' as a preposition.<sup>7</sup> This word, cognate with nouns meaning 'house' in other Romance languages (Spanish *casa*, etc.), has completely ceased to be used as a noun in Modern French, and the construction it forms with its complement does not show the characteristics of the genitive construction of Modern French.

### 2.2.3 *Orientation with respect to a person's usual residence as a possible reading of cases or adpositions encoding proximity*

In many languages (Russian, Hungarian, etc.), 'at N's usual residence' constitutes a possible interpretation of a construction whose basic meaning is 'in the vicinity of N'. In (2a), the adessive suffix of Hungarian has its basic meaning of location in the vicinity of the orienter, whereas in (2b), it encodes location at the usual residence of a person without necessarily implying that the person referred to as Jóska was physically present when the speaker visited him.

- (2) Hungarian (Uralic; Szende & Kassai 2001: 110)
- a. *Találkozzunk a postá-nál.*  
meet:IMP:1PL DEF post.office-ADE  
'Let us meet near the post office.'
- b. *Jóská-nál voltam.*  
Jóska-ADE be:PST:1SG  
'I was at Jóska's place.'

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7. In addition to this meaning, *chez* is used in the expression of spatial configurations involving shops or factories in orienter function (even if they are not designated by the name of their owner), and in constructions referring to typical features of human individuals, groups of humans, or animal species (*C'est devenu une habitude chez moi* 'It's become a habit with me').



#### 2.2.4 Orientation with respect to a person's usual residence as a possible reading of spatial cases unspecified for configuration

Some languages have spatial cases that do not imply any particular type of spatial configuration. The constructions in which they occur may refer to a variety of configurations, and their use in the expression of concrete spatial relationships is conditioned by the fact that the particular configuration referred to is the configuration expected from the lexical meaning of the noun in orienter function, or more generally can be inferred from the context. Interestingly, 'at/to/from N's residence' may be a default interpretation of human nouns combined with such cases.

For example, Turkish has three spatial cases that encode directionality without any hint at any particular type of spatial configuration (allative-dative, locative, ablative). Spatial configurations can be specified by means of a construction in which the orienter is encoded as the genitive dependent of a locational noun in a spatial case, but if reference to a particular configuration is not relevant, or judged superfluous in a given context, the spatial case may simply attach to the noun representing the orienter. For example, 'on the table' can be expressed as *masa-nın üst-ün-de* [table-GEN top-3SG-LOC], with the spatial case suffix attached to the locational noun *üst*, or simply *masa-da* [table-LOC]. Similarly, localization or movement with respect to a person's usual residence can be unambiguously expressed by means of the noun *ev* 'house', but is also a possible reading of spatial forms of NPs referring to persons. For example, 'at my place' can be expressed as *ev-im-de* [house-1SG-LOC] or simply *ben-de* [1SG-LOC].

Similarly, in Akhvakh (Nakh-Daghestanian) the *-g-* series of spatial cases is semantically a default series that does not refer to a particular type of spatial configuration. As illustrated by (3a–b), depending on the semantic nature of the orienter and of the other elements of the construction, this series of spatial cases lends itself to a variety of interpretations, and in combination with human nouns, its commonest interpretation is 'at N's usual residence', as in (3c). Interestingly, if the orienter is not the person's residence, but the person him/herself, a specialized orientation marker specifically encoding 'in the vicinity of' is required, as in (3d).

- (3) Akhvakh (Nakh-Daghestanian (Andic); Denis Creissels' field notes)
- a. *šagi ča-g-a b-iš-a!*  
pan fire-CFG<sub>1</sub>-ALL N-put-IMP  
'Put the pan on the fire!'
  - b. *hēma-na beLō-g-a r-iš<sup>m</sup>-aj-a!*  
cow-PL cowshed-CFG<sub>1</sub>-ALL N<sup>+</sup>-gather-CAUS-IMP  
'Gather the cows in the cowshed!'
  - c. *eLo m-aŕ-ōji di-g-a!*  
HORT H<sup>+</sup>-go-POT.H<sup>+</sup> 1SG-CFG<sub>1</sub>-ALL  
'Let's go to my place!'

- d. *w-oq'-a*      *di-Īir-a!*  
 M-come-IMP 1SG-CFG<sub>2</sub>-ALL  
 'Come to me!'

### 2.3 Conclusion of Section 2

From the perspective of the question addressed in this paper, it is particularly interesting to observe that some spatial markers tend to show a special behavior in combination with animate nouns:

- a. In combination with animate nouns, spatial markers encoding interiority tend to be reserved for the expression of abstract relationships involving the personality of the individual rather than the individual as a concrete entity.
- b. In many languages, 'at N's usual residence' is expressed metonymically, i.e. by combining human nouns directly with spatial markers (either encoding proximity or unspecified for configuration).

The fact that human nouns combined with spatial markers expressing proximity or unspecified for configuration may refer to a person's usual residence rather than to the person him/herself is consistent with the idea that, as will be developed in Section 3, the particularities of animate nouns in the conceptualization and expression of spatial relationships are not limited to the expression of interiority. More generally, animate nouns often show particularities suggesting that taking humans as spatial orienters must be in some way or other a marked option.

## 3. The affinity of human nouns with heavy spatial marking

In this section, we briefly present two typical cases of languages illustrating the tendency to use a heavy variety of spatial marking with human nouns, in order to show that the situation of Basque examined in more detail in the following sections is representative of a widespread cross-linguistic tendency. Other examples of languages illustrating the same tendency are discussed by Aristar (1996).

### 3.1 Eastern Armenian<sup>8</sup>

Modern Eastern Armenian has three ways of expressing location: the citation form of the noun phrase, as in (4a); the locative case in *-um*, as in (4b); and use of spatial

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8. With the only exception of (8) (from Garibjan & Garibjan 1970:195), the data examined in this section is taken from Comrie (1986), and the comment is a summary of Comrie's comment on the same data.

postpositions combined with the noun phrase in a non-spatial case (most often, the genitive case), as in (4c):

- (4) a. *Aprum em Yerevan.*  
 living I.am Erevan  
 'I live in Erevan.'
- b. *Aprum em Yerevan-um.*  
 living I.am Erevan-LOC  
 'I live in Erevan.'
- c. *Aprum em Yerevan-i mej.*  
 living I.am Erevan-GEN in  
 'I live in Erevan.'

The locative case overtly indicates location, but does not specify the kind of location involved, whereas the postpositional construction specifies the precise kind of locational relation involved.

The choice among the three possibilities involves a correlation between the formal markedness of the locative construction and the degree of semantic markedness of the spatial configuration being described. The least marked construction, as in (4a), is restricted to the colloquial language, and is possible only if a locational verb combines with a noun phrase of place; if one replaces *aprel* 'to live' with *utel* 'to eat', the acceptability of the sentence is affected:

- (5) ?*Utum em Yerevan.*  
 eating I.am Erevan  
 'I eat in Erevan.'

The locative is preferred with noun phrases referring to places, and is interpreted as the most natural configuration involving the figure and the orienter in question. For a city, this is 'in', as in (4c); for a street, the locative is synonymous with *vəra* 'on', as in (6b):

- (6) a. *Aprum em ays p<sup>h</sup>oyoc<sup>h</sup>-um.*  
 living I.am this street-LOC  
 'I live on this street.'
- b. *Aprum em ays p<sup>h</sup>oyoch-i vəra.*  
 living I.am this street-GEN on  
 'I live on this street.'

For nouns that are not inherently names of places, but refer to entities readily conceivable as places (typically, inanimate objects), the locative is still possible with the interpretation of the most natural configuration, but the postpositional construction is often preferred. For example, a pin can be localized in a box by using the locative or the postposition *mej* 'in', as in (7a–b), since a box is a receptacle, but 'on top of the box' can only be expressed using the postposition *vəra* 'on', as in (7c).

- (7) a. *Gəndasey-ə tup<sup>h</sup>-um e.*  
 pin-DEF box-LOC is  
 ‘The pin is in the box.’
- b. *Gəndasey-ə tup<sup>h</sup>-i mej e.*  
 pin-DEF box-GEN in is  
 ‘The pin is in the box.’
- c. *Gəndasey-ə tup<sup>h</sup>-i vərə e.*  
 pin-DEF box-GEN on is  
 ‘The pin is on the box.’

With animate NPs in the role of orienter, the locative is simply not available. In Eastern Armenian, the locative case exists only for inanimate nouns, which implies that the expression of spatial relationships involving animates in orienter function, whatever their precise nature (concrete or metaphorical) requires the use of postpositions.

In particular, Eastern Armenian expresses reference to the usual residence of a person by means of the postposition *mot*, whose basic meaning is the expression of proximity (8).

- (8) a. *Gnank<sup>h</sup> aybjur-i mot!*  
 let.us.go fountain-GEN near  
 ‘Let us go to the fountain!’
- b. *Gnankh ənker-oj-s mot!*  
 let.us.go friend-GEN-1SG near  
 ‘Let us go to my friend’s place!’

### 3.2 Classical Nahuatl<sup>9</sup>

Nahuatl has two ways of encoding that the referent of a noun is conceptualized as the orienter in a spatial relation: either by attaching the locative suffix *-c(o)* to the noun, or by combining it with an adposition or a locational noun. In both cases, the distinction between static location, destination of movement and source of movement is not encoded at NP level, and is apparent in the choice of the verbal lexeme only. NPs combined with the locative suffix or with adpositions have the syntactic distribution characteristic of a category whose members are designated as *locatives* in Launey’s terminology. This category includes locative interrogatives, locative adverbs, toponyms, and deverbal locatives (i.e. words derived from verbs and expressing ‘place where *V-ing* occurs’) (Launey 1981:52–53).

Adpositions occur in two types of constructions. In the first type, illustrated by (9), they combine with noun stems with which they form locative compounds; such

9. The data presented in this section is taken from Launey 1981.

compounds, being inherently locative, do not take the locative suffix *-c(o)* but occur in the same contexts as NPs marked by this suffix.

- (9) a. *cal-pan*  
house-at  
'at home'
- b. *tēc-pan*  
lord-at  
'at a palace'

In the second type of construction, illustrated by (10), the postposition is the head of a genitive construction in which the NP referring to the orienter fulfills the role of dependent. Exactly like in ordinary genitive constructions, the dependent NP does not occupy a fixed position relative to its head, and bears no mark of its role of genitive dependent, whereas the head obligatorily takes a possessive prefix. Like in ordinary genitive constructions, depending on its meaning and on the context, the dependent NP can be omitted, as in (10b):

- (10) a. *īm-pan tētēuctin*  
3PL-at lord.PL  
'at the lords' place'
- b. *no-pan*  
1SG-at  
'at my place'

The two possible uses of adpositions encoding specific spatial configurations have been illustrated with the example of *pan*, whose basic meaning is 'in the vicinity of'. Other members of this category are *cpac* 'on top of', *tlan* 'under', 'beside', *tech* 'in contact with', etc. The specification of some other configurations requires the use of forms that have the same distribution as the postpositions but are morphologically the locative form of a locational noun, as for example *itic* 'in', locative form of *ititl* 'stomach, inside'. For a precise inventory of Nahuatl adpositions and locational nouns, see Launey (1981: 116–122, 226–234).

Nahuatl illustrates the same correlation between morphological types of spatial marking and semantic markedness of the spatial configuration as Armenian. The locative suffix *-c(o)* does not encode a particular type of spatial configuration, and is interpreted as referring to the most natural configuration in a given context, whereas adpositions and locational nouns encode specific types of spatial configurations. For example, with *calli* 'house', *cal-co* is interpreted as 'in the house', since a house can be conceived as a container, and *cal-co* is therefore more or less synonymous with *cal-iti-c* [house-inside-LOC] 'in the house'. But the meaning of interiority is not inherent to the suffix *-c(o)*, since the same suffix is found for example in *tepē-c* 'on the mountain' or *tlapan-co* 'on the roof'.

The relationship between spatial marking and animacy is similar to that observed in Armenian too. In Nahuatl, animate nouns can fulfill the role of orienter in a spatial configuration in combination with adpositions, but are incompatible with the locative suffix *-c(o)*.

### 3.3 Conclusion of Section 3

Armenian and Nahuatl illustrate the same tendency of animate nouns towards the selection of heavy spatial marking, both formally and semantically, in the sense that the spatial markers of Armenian and Nahuatl equally divide into affixes unspecified for configuration and words specified for configuration, and animate nouns are compatible with the second type of spatial markers only.

Not all languages exhibit these tendencies. However, it is significant that, whenever human or animate nouns differ from other semantic groups of nouns in spatial case marking, their specificity involves incompatibility with a type of spatial case marking that can be characterized as relatively light either from a formal or from a semantic point of view, or both.

The only possible explanation is that humans are relatively reluctant to conceptualize spatial relations with animate entities in the role of orienter. Comrie's comment about this difficulty to envisage animate beings as places is that "the relevant parameter is people's conceptualization of the real world, rather than actual properties of the real world: physically, animate beings make just as good receptacles, or locational orienters, as inanimate objects, but it turns out that people do not think of animate beings in this way." However, this reluctance to conceive animate beings as places is perhaps not so arbitrary as this quotation suggests, since optimal locational orienters occupy a fixed position in space, and animate beings are typically more mobile than inanimate objects. This explanation accounts for a general tendency towards using more marked constructions for spatial relations with animate beings in the role of orienter. It also explains that, as illustrated in Section 2 by Turkish and Akhvakh, spatial markers unspecified for configuration may lend themselves to a semantic shift by which the entity interpreted as the orienter is not the human individual, but his/her residence. The residence of an individual is indeed an element of the personal sphere that at the same time has a particularly intimate link with the individual and occupies a fixed position in space.

## 4. Animate nouns and spatial marking in Standard Basque

Basque shows variations in the form and the use of spatial cases readily attributable to the tendency to use more morphological material to encode semantically

marked configurations, and here again, the behavior of animate nouns suggests that animate beings are the most difficult to conceptualize as orienters in spatial configurations.

#### 4.1 The expression of spatial relations in Basque

Basque noun inflection includes three spatial cases that encode the distinction between static location (locative), movement from a source (ablative), and movement towards a goal (allative), but are unspecified for configuration. For example, the same locative ending is found in *leiho-an* ‘at the window’, *kale-an* ‘in the street’, and *mahai-an* ‘on the table’. The expression of specific spatial configurations requires a construction in which the orienter in the genitive or absolutive case combines with a locational noun in one of the three spatial cases, as in *ohe azpi-tik* [bed bottom-ABL] ‘from under the bed’, or *liburu-en gain-ean* [book-PL.GEN top-LOC] ‘on the books’.

In addition to their spatial uses, spatial cases have non-spatial uses, and this distinction is relevant to the analysis of the particular behavior of animate nouns.

#### 4.2 The spatial forms of nouns in Standard Basque

In Basque, case inflection of NPs as described in recent grammars of the standard language (*euskara batua*) includes three spatial cases that interact with the ending of noun stems and with definiteness and number marking as illustrated in (11).

- (11) The spatial cases of Basque (ordinary nouns)
- a. Stems ending with a vowel other than *a* (*mendi* ‘mountain’)
 

	indef.	def.sg.	def.pl.
loc.	<i>mendi-tan</i>	<i>mendi-an</i>	<i>mendi-etan</i>
abl.	<i>mendi-tatik</i>	<i>mendi-tik</i>	<i>mendi-etatik</i>
all.	<i>mendi-tara</i>	<i>mendi-ra</i>	<i>mendi-etara</i>
  - b. Stems ending with *a* (*hondartza* ‘beach’)
 

	indef.	def.sg.	def.pl.
loc.	<i>hondartza-tan</i>	<i>hondartz-an</i>	<i>hondartz-etan</i>
abl.	<i>hondartza-tatik</i>	<i>hondartz-a-tik</i>	<i>hondartz-etatik</i>
all.	<i>hondartza-tara</i>	<i>hondartz-a-ra</i>	<i>hondartz-etara</i>
  - c. Stems ending with a consonant (*zuhaitz* ‘tree’)
 

	indef.	def.sg.	def.pl.
loc.	<i>zuhaitz-etan</i>	<i>zuhaitz-e-an</i>	<i>zuhaitz-etan</i>
abl.	<i>zuhaitz-etatik</i>	<i>zuhaitz-etik</i>	<i>zuhaitz-etatik</i>
all.	<i>zuhaitz-etara</i>	<i>zuhaitz-e-ra</i>	<i>zuhaitz-etara</i>

Toponyms have shorter variants of the spatial case suffixes (12), whereas animate nouns have longer variants (13).

## (12) The spatial cases of Basque (toponyms)

	<i>Bilbo</i>	<i>Eibar</i>	<i>Irun</i>
loc.	<i>Bilbo-n</i>	<i>Eibarr-en</i>	<i>Irun-en</i>
abl.	<i>Bilbo-tik</i>	<i>Eibar-tik ~ Eibarr-etik</i>	<i>Irun-dik ~ Irun-etik</i>
all.	<i>Bilbo-ra</i>	<i>Eibarr-era ~ Eibarr-a</i>	<i>Irun-era ~ Irun-a</i>

## (13) The spatial cases of Basque (animate nouns)

a. Stems ending with a vowel other than *a* (*gazte* 'young')

	indef.	def.sg.	def.pl.
loc.	<i>gazte-rengan</i>	<i>gazte-a(ren)gan</i>	<i>gazte-engan</i>
abl.	<i>gazte-rengandik</i>	<i>gazte-a(ren)gandik</i>	<i>gazte-engandik</i>
all.	<i>gazte-rengana</i>	<i>gazte-a(ren)gana</i>	<i>gazte-engana</i>

b. Stems ending with *a* (*neska* 'girl')

	indef.	def.sg.	def.pl.
loc.	<i>neska-rengan</i>	<i>nesk-a(ren)gan</i>	<i>nesk-engan</i>
abl.	<i>neska-rengandik</i>	<i>nesk-a(ren)gandik</i>	<i>nesk-engandik</i>
all.	<i>neska-rengana</i>	<i>nesk-a(ren)gana</i>	<i>nesk-engana</i>

c. Stems ending with a consonant (*mutil* 'boy')

	indef.	def.sg.	def.pl.
loc.	<i>mutil-engan</i>	<i>mutil-a(ren)gan</i>	<i>mutil-engan</i>
abl.	<i>mutil-engandik</i>	<i>mutil-a(ren)gandik</i>	<i>mutil-engandik</i>
all.	<i>mutil-engana</i>	<i>mutil-a(ren)gana</i>	<i>mutil-engana</i>

## d. Proper names

	<i>Edurne</i>	<i>Miren</i>
loc.	<i>Edurne-(ren)gan</i>	<i>Miren-(en)gan</i>
abl.	<i>Edurne-(ren)gandik</i>	<i>Miren-(en)gandik</i>
all.	<i>Edurne-(ren)gana</i>	<i>Miren-(en)gana</i>

Morphologically, the spatial case suffixes for animate nouns include a formative *-gan-* followed by one of the three formatives  $-\emptyset$  (locative), *-dik* (ablative) or *-a* (allative), and preceded (sometimes optionally) by a formative identical to the genitive suffix *-(r)en*. Consequently, an alternative analysis is possible, according to which animate nouns do not have spatial cases at all, and can only fulfill the functions that require the use of a spatial case in a construction in which they constitute the complement of a postposition *gan- $\emptyset$ /a/dik* governing the genitive or the absolute case. Note that this alternative analysis of *gan* as a postposition devoid of any semantic content and whose only role is to license the use of animate nouns in functions requiring the use of spatial cases is found in particular in Lafitte's grammar of the Lapurdian and Low-Navarrese dialects (Lafitte 1962).

As usual with semantically driven grammatical distinctions, the rule according to which the formative *-gan-* must be used with animate nouns and cannot be



used with inanimates is not exceptionless, but most exceptions lend themselves to a straightforward explanation in terms of de-personification of animate nouns and personification of inanimate nouns. For more details on this question, see Azkue (1923–1925: 301–304), Euskaltzaindia (1985: 348–352).

There are however a few exceptions that do not lend themselves to this kind of explanation. As illustrated by (14) from Euskaltzaindia (1985: 351), *gan* is used with the reciprocal pronouns *elkar* and *bata bestea* referring to inanimates in contexts that exclude an explanation in terms of personification.

- (14) *Liburu hori-ek bakan itzazu elkar-ren-gan-dik.*  
 book that-PL separate IMP.2SG.3PL RECP-GEN-*gan*-ABL  
 ‘Separate those books from each other!’

#### 4.3 The use of the spatial forms of animate nouns

In Basque, the spatial forms of animate nouns are not only characterized by a relatively heavy morphological marking: they also tend to be avoided in the expression of genuine spatial relationships, and are mainly found in contexts in which spatial cases fulfill non-spatial functions that have only an etymological link with their primary spatial function.

In contexts in which the spatial cases are used in non-spatial functions, the spatial cases of animates nouns including the formative *gan* are fully productive and are used in exactly the same way as the spatial cases of other semantic types of nouns, as illustrated by (15), where the locative case is required by *sinetsi* ‘believe’.

- (15) a. *Sines-ten dut demokrazi-an.*  
 believe-IPFV PRS.3SG.1SG<sup>10</sup> democracy-SG.LOC  
 ‘I believe in democracy.’  
 b. *Sines-ten dut Jainkoa-gan.*  
 believe-IPFV PRS.3SG.1SG God-*gan*[LOC]  
 ‘I believe in God.’

In Standard Basque, *gan-Ø/a/dik* is not used to encode ‘at/to/from N’s usual residence’. This meaning is commonly expressed via the ellipsis strategy (see Section 2 above). For example, *Amaia-ren-ean* [Amaia-GEN-LOC] is the literal equivalent of English ‘at Amaia’s’, and is described in Basque grammars as resulting from the reduction of *Amaia-ren etxe-an* ‘at Amaia’s house’. It seems that the elliptical form is preferred in the western and central dialects, whereas the full form is more usual in the eastern dialects.

10. *Sinetsi* ‘believe’ belongs to a subclass of intransitive verbs that are conjugated like transitive verbs with an expletive 3rd person P marker, and assign the ergative case to their S argument.

The elliptical form is, however, attested in oiconyms in the eastern area too (Zuberoa/Soule, Low Navarre, and Lapurdi/Labour, with the exception of the Lapurdian coast, where oiconyms formed with *baita* are more common).<sup>11</sup> This suggests that the ellipsis strategy in the expression of ‘at/to/from N’s usual residence’ may have been common to all dialects in the past.

In the expression of other spatial relationships with an animate being in orienter role, the construction with locational nouns is of course fully productive. By contrast, the use of the spatial cases with the formative *-gan-* is restricted, but the situation is not identical for the three spatial cases. The allative *-gana* is productively used with the spatial meaning ‘to the place where N stands’ (but *not* ‘to N’s usual residence’ – see above), whereas the locative *-gan* is never found with a purely spatial meaning, and the spatial use of the ablative *-gandik* is severely restricted.

The precise conditions in which *-gandik* can be used with a purely spatial meaning are difficult to formulate. An inquiry conducted with a sample of consultants representative of the main Basque dialects revealed that all consultants agree in the possibility to use the ablative of animate nouns in the construction of the verb *hurrundu* ‘move away from’.<sup>12</sup> With other verbs implying movement from a source, *-gandik* is sporadically used by some consultants, but is in most cases rejected.

Interestingly, the inquiry also revealed that the use of *N ondo-tik* lit. ‘from N’s side’ or *N dagoen toki-tik* lit. ‘from the place where N stands’ are not the only strategies used by the consultants to avoid the ablative of animate nouns in the expression of purely spatial relationships. Some of them extend the use of the construction whose usual meaning in Basque is ‘from N’s usual residence’ to situations in which the orienter is clearly the person him/herself, not his/her residence. In (16), provided by our Bizkaian consultant, *amarenetik* is the form normally used with the meaning ‘from mother’s place’ and commonly explained as an elliptical variant of *amaren etxetik* ‘from mother’s house’, as already commented above.

- (16) *Ume-a joa-n da ama-ren-etik sofa-ra.*  
 child-SG go-PFV PRS.3SG mother-SG.GEN-ABL sofa-SG.ALL  
 ‘The baby walked from her mother to the sofa.’

11. For example: *Joanttipiaenea* ‘Little John’s (house)’ (Itxassou, Labour), *Medikuenea* ‘The Doctor’s (house)’ (Bidarray, Low Navarre), *Jakesenea* ‘James’ (house)’ (Beyrie-sur-Joyeuse, Low Navarre), *Kapitainarenea* ‘The Captain’s (house)’ (Osses, Low Navarre).

12. Six main Basque dialects are usually distinguished: Biskaian, Gipuzkoan, and High Navarrese (in Spain), and Low Navarrese, Lapurdian (Labourdin), and Zuberoan (Souletin) (in France). The standard version of Basque called *Batua* (‘unified’ in Basque), which is the language taught in schools, is based largely on the Gipuzkoan dialect.

## 5. Variations in the spatial marking of animate nouns in Basque dialects

The use of special spatial forms of animate nouns with the formative *gan* is found in all Basque dialects, with however variations in the degree of obligatoriness of *gan*. In some Eastern dialects, the use of *gan* with animate nouns is absolutely obligatory in the definite singular only (Euskaltzaindia 1985: 350).

Moreover, in addition to *gan-Ø/a/dik*, the Eastern dialects of Basque (Lapurdian, High Navarrese, Low Navarrese, and Zuberoan) have a postposition *bait(h)a-n/ra/tik* (generally governing the genitive case) with a similar function. Like *gan-Ø/a/dik*, it does not encode any concrete type of spatial configuration, and is used just to compensate the incompatibility of animate nouns with standard spatial case endings.

In particular, *baita* is found exactly like *gan* in constructions in which spatial cases have no concrete spatial content, as in (17) from Lafitte's grammar of Lapurdian/Low Navarrese (Lafitte 1962: 170), to be compared with its standard equivalent (15b) above.

- (17) *Sines-ten dut Jainkoa baita-n.*  
 believe-IPFV PRS.3SG.1SG God *baita-LOC*  
 'I believe in God.'

An important difference in the uses of *gan* and *baita* is however that, contrary to *gan* (see Section 4.3), *baita* is attested with the meaning 'at N's (a person) usual residence', as in (18) from a 19th century manuscript quoted by Mitxelena (1987–2005).

- (18) *Anaia baita-ra doha.*  
 brother *baita-ALL* go.PRS.3SG  
 'He is going to his brother's.'

This use of *baita* is consistent with the fact that *baita* is also found as the second formative of oiconyms, for example *Petrikobaita* 'Peter's' (Biriadou), *Beñatbaita* 'Bernard's' (Urrugne).

Note however that the area where *baita* is found with the meaning 'at someone's usual residence' is more restricted than the area where it is attested with the purely formal function fulfilled by *gan* in Standard Basque.

As already mentioned in Section 4.3, there seems also to be in some dialects a tendency to extend the use of the construction normally interpreted as 'at/to/from N's usual residence' to the expression of other spatial relationships involving a person in orienter role.

## 6. Animate nouns and spatial marking in the history of Basque

### 6.1 General remarks

Our study of the spatial marking of animate nouns in the history of Basque relies on two corpora: a corpus of texts from the 16th century (the most ancient period

for which a sizeable amount of Basque texts is available), and a corpus of texts from the 18th century. The 16th century corpus consists of Etxepare (1545, Eastern Low Navarrese) and Lazarraga (no date, written in a now extinct Western variety from Araba). The 18th century corpus includes Etxeberri de Sare (1712–1718, Lapurdian), Arzadun (1731, Bizkaian), Urkizu (1737, Bizkaian), Maizter (1757, Zuberoan), and Ubillos (1785, Gipuzkoan).

The formatives *gan* and *baita*, obligatory in the spatial marking of animate nouns in present-day Basque, are already attested in the most ancient texts, with however a distribution differing from that observed now and showing interesting fluctuations in the corpus we have examined.

As regards the possibility to use the spatial cases of animate nouns in a purely spatial function, our corpus does not provide evidence of a situation different from that observed in present-day Basque: in our corpus, the spatial cases of animate nouns (with or without *gan*) are mainly found in non-spatial functions, and the allative is the only one for which the possibility of a purely spatial use is clearly attested. This observation must be taken with caution, since most ancient Basque texts are religious texts, and consequently cannot be expected to provide abundant illustration of the expression of genuine spatial relationships, but rather of the metaphorical use of spatial cases. It seems however reasonable to conclude that the tendency to avoid purely spatial uses of the locative and ablative cases of animate nouns already existed in the 16th century.

## 6.2 The use of *gan* and *baita* in ancient texts

### 6.2.1 *The use of gan in the spatial marking of animate pronouns*

In Etxepare, the allative and ablative forms of animate pronouns always involve the use of *gan* or *baita*, whereas the locative suffix is almost always directly attached to the pronouns. By contrast, in Lazarraga, with very few exceptions, the spatial forms of pronouns (including the locative) involve the use of *gan* (19):

- (19) (Lazarraga: 27–28)
- |                       |           |                |                   |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------------|-------------------|
| <i>Ni-gan</i>         | <i>ez</i> | <i>dago</i>    |                   |
| 1SG- <i>gan</i> [LOC] | NEG       | be.PRS.3SG     |                   |
| <i>zu-re-a</i>        | <i>ez</i> | <i>dan</i>     | <i>gauza-rik.</i> |
| 2SG-GEN-SG            | NEG       | be.PRS.3SG.REL | thing-PTV         |
- ‘There is nothing in me that does not belong to you.’

In the 18th century corpus, Maizter is the only text showing a distribution partially similar to that observed in Etxepare, with the locative of animate pronouns formed either by direct affixation of the locative suffix, or with the intermediary of *baita* (never *gan*). With a single exception in Etxeberri de Sare, in all other texts from the 18th century, the spatial cases of animate pronouns (including the locative) always involve the use of *gan*.

### 6.2.2 *The use of gan in the spatial marking of animate nouns*

In the 16th century texts, the spatial forms of animate nouns involve the use of *gan* in the definite singular (20), but not in the definite plural or in the indefinite. In the 18th century texts, the distribution of *gan* with animate nouns is not very different, although our corpus includes sporadic examples of *gan* with animate nouns in the definite plural or in the indefinite (21).

(20) (Etxepare: 128)

*Nahi du-ien-a hala duke*  
 want PRS.3SG.3SG-REL-SG thus may.obtain.POT.3SG.3SG  
*ama-k semi-a-gan-ik.*  
 mother-ERG son-SG-gan-ABL

‘In this way a mother may obtain whatever she wants from her son.’

(21) (Ubillos: 120)

*gaizto-ak-gan-dik aldegin*  
 nasty-PL-gan-ABL get.away  
 ‘to get away from nasty people’

### 6.2.3 *The use of gan in the spatial marking of inanimate nouns and pronouns*

In Standard Basque, apart from the exceptions mentioned in Section 4.2 above, *gan* systematically occurs in the spatial forms of animate nouns, and is not found with inanimate nouns. By contrast, in the texts from the 18th century (i.e. at a stage when the use of *gan* with animate nouns in the definite plural or in the indefinite was still sporadic), *gan* is sporadically attested with inanimate pronouns other than those mentioned in Section 4.2, and even with inanimate nouns (22).

(22) (Ubillos: 195)

*Non-dic dator becatu ori?*  
 where-ABL come.PRS.3SG sin this  
 ‘Where does this sin come from?’  
*Adan-ek egin zuan becatu-a-gan-dic.*  
 Adam-ERG make PST.3SG.3SG[REL] sin-SG-gan-ABL

‘From the sin that Adam made.’

### 6.2.4 *The use of baita*

In our corpus of ancient texts, *baita* occurs only in Etxepare, Etxeberri de Sare and Maizter, which is consistent with the distribution of this postposition in present-day dialects. The most ancient of these texts (Etxepare) includes only two occurrences of *baita*, both with pronouns. In Maizter and Etxeberri de Sare, it is more frequent, but mainly with pronouns in the locative. It is rarely found with nouns, or with pronouns in the allative or ablative (which are predominantly formed by means of *gan*).

Semantically, our corpus includes two attestations of *baita* with the meaning ‘at someone’s place’, otherwise its use is limited to abstract localization (23), concrete localization with respect to animate orienters represented by pronouns being rather encoded by means of *gan*.

(23) (Maizter: 92)

*Guizon debot-a bere beitha-n berhala*  
 man devout-SG 3SG.INT.GEN *baita*-LOC immediately  
*sar-tcen da.*  
 enter-IPFV PRS.3SG

‘A devout man immediately enters in himself.’

*Baita* is also found in Etxeberri de Sare with reference to inanimates, but only with a meaning of abstract localization, in the combinations *bere baitharik* ‘from itself’ and *bere baithan* ‘in itself’.

### 6.3 Direct affixation of spatial case markers in ancient texts

#### 6.3.1 *Spatial case markers directly affixed to animate pronouns*

It follows from the description of the distribution of *gan* and *baita* that, in the 16th century, it was possible to attach spatial case markers directly to pronouns, both in Eastern and Western dialects, with however more or less strong restrictions.<sup>13</sup> In Etxepare (Low Navarrese), this use is regular in the locative (24), whereas *gan* or *baita* are regularly found in the ablative and allative.

(24) (Etxepare: 90)

*Bekhatu-rik ez-ta izan zu-tan, Andre handi-a.*  
 sin-PTV NEG-PRS.3SG be 2SG-LOC Lady noble-SG  
 ‘In Thee, noble Lady, there is no taint of sin.’

In Lazarraga (Araban), we have just two attestations of spatial case markers directly attached to pronouns, one in the locative (*zue-tan* [you.PL-LOC]), and the other in the allative (*zue-tara* [you.PL-ALL]).

In the 18th century, Maizter (Zuberoan) is the only text in which we have found attestations of spatial case markers directly attached to pronouns: in this text, the locative of pronouns is overwhelmingly formed by means of *baita*, but attestations of pronouns with the locative marker directly affixed are still frequent (27 vs. 45); by contrast, *gan*, never attested with pronouns in the locative, is regularly used in the allative and ablative, with only two attestations of the allative suffix directly attached to a pronoun (25).

13. Before the discovery of the Lazarraga text, this use had been found in Eastern sources only.

- (25) (Maizter: 102)  
*Ez-tira gu-tara jin-en gaitz-ak.*  
 NEG-PRS.3SG 1PL-ALL come-FUT damage-PL  
 ‘Damages won’t come to us.’

### 6.3.2 Spatial case markers directly affixed to animate nouns

In our corpus, direct affixation of spatial case markers is not attested with animate nouns in the definite singular, but is regular in the definite plural or in the indefinite, in particular in the locative: the only attestations of indirect attachment of spatial case markers we have for definite plural or indefinite nouns are in the allative or ablative, never in the locative (26–27).

- (26) (Lazarraga: 169–170)  
*Neure buruau ez nei ondo*  
 1SG.REFL NEG do.HYP well  
*andra-tan confia-tze-a.*  
 woman[INDF]-LOC trust-NMLZ-SG  
 ‘I would not be right by trusting women.’
- (27) (Arzadun: 21)  
*Geure arerio-etarik libradu gagizuz!*  
 1PL.INT.GEN enemy[INDF]-ABL liberate IMP.2SG.1PL  
 ‘Release us from our enemies!’

Non-human animates may have constituted another exception to the rule of indirect affixation of the spatial case markers to animate nouns. Unfortunately, all the unquestionable attestations of non-human animates in spatial cases we came across are in the plural, and consequently we cannot decide whether direct affixation was triggered by plural, or by the non-human nature of the referent. It is however interesting to observe that, in Maizter, direct affixation of spatial case markers is common with names of divinities (Jesus, God), and this use is attested in Leizarraga (1571) too (not included in our corpus).

- (28) (Maizter: 84)  
*Bere confidantcha ossoua*  
 3SG.INT.GEN trust all  
*Jincoua-tan eçar-ten du.*  
 God[INDF]-LOC put-IPFV PRS.3SG.3SG  
 ‘He puts all his trust in God.’
- (29) (Maizter: 109)  
*Jesus-egatic eta Jesus-etan maitha itçaçu*  
 Jesus-MTV and Jesus[INDF]-LOC love IMP.2SG.3PL

*çou-re exayac!*  
 2SG-GEN enemy.PL  
 ‘Love your enemies because of Jesus and in Jesus!’

#### 6.4 The problem of *buru*

Example (30) illustrates a construction found in Ubillos, in which *buru* ‘head’ can be analyzed as fulfilling the same function as *gan* or *baita*:

- (30) *Asmatu zuan bere buru-tic*  
 imagine be.PST.3SG.3SG 3SG.INT.GEN head-ABL  
*legue berri bat.*  
 law new one  
 lit. ‘He imagined a new law from himself.’

According to the analysis found in Euskaltzaindia, in this construction, *bere burutic* is nothing else than the ablative of the third person intensive pronoun whose genitive form is *bere*, and the presence of *buru* is simply due to the reluctance to attach spatial case suffixes directly to animate nouns or pronouns. A possible objection to this analysis is that a similar use of *buru* should be found not only with pronouns, but also with nouns, which is not the case. Given that the use of *gan* and *baita* seems to have developed with pronouns first, it is possible that this use of *buru* reflects the first stage of the same grammaticalization process, which in the case of *buru* would not have developed further. Another explanation is, however, possible. The point is that “intensive pronoun in the genitive + *buru*” is a regular way to form reflexive pronouns in Basque (*neure burua* ‘myself’, *zeure burua* ‘yourself’, etc.). Consequently, an alternative analysis is that *bere burutic* in (25) is an ablative form of the third person reflexive pronoun (or pronominal periphrasis) *bere burua* with the ablative suffix attached directly to the pronoun (i.e. an equivalent of the present-day Batua form *bere buru-aren-gan-dik*, in which *gan* is inserted between the genitive form of the pronoun and the ablative suffix).

#### 6.5 Summary of Section 6: The evolution

Given the tendencies generally observed in phenomena sensitive to animacy hierarchy, it is not surprising that, before generalizing to all animate NPs, the use of *gan* or *baita* in contexts triggering the use of spatial cases was already more systematic with pronouns than with nouns. The fact that the use of *gan* or *baita* was already regular with nouns in the definite singular at a stage of the evolution when direct affixation was still widespread with plural or indefinite nouns is not surprising either. What is less expected is the very clear-cut contrast we have found in our data between the locative and the other two spatial cases. All other things being equal, our corpus of



ancient Basque texts shows that the use of *gan* or *baita* became general in the allative and ablative cases before spreading to the locative.

## 7. The etymology of the formatives involved in the spatial marking of Basque animate nouns

### 7.1 The etymology of *gan*

In the case of *gan*, it must first be noted that, even in the most ancient texts, the only function in which *gan* is found is the purely formal function it has in present-day Basque. Several etymological hypotheses can be considered, but none of them has gained general acceptance. This question is complicated by the fact that, more generally, the reconstruction of the spatial cases remains a particularly controversial question among scholars of Basque.

Trask (1997:202) analyzes *gan* as resulting from the grammaticalization of the locational noun *gain* ‘top’. According to this hypothesis, *-gan-Ø/a/dik* would be cognate with *gaine-an/ra/tik* ‘on top of’. This is supported by the fact that some variants of Bizkaian use *gain* instead of *gan* in the formation of the spatial cases of animate nouns (Azkue 1923–1925:336), and also by attestations of *gain* (spelt *gañ* or *gaiñ*) in the function normally fulfilled by *gan* in the ancient Bizkaian texts (Arzadun and Urkizu). It seems, however, that the Bizkaian attestations of *gain* in the same function as *gan* are rather the result of a reinterpretation. The point is that an evolution *gain* > *gan* in all dialects would be in contradiction with Basque historical phonetics, since Bizkaian is precisely the only dialect in which *\*ain* regularly became *an* (Mitxelena 1961:103). If *gan* resulted from the grammaticalization of *gain* ‘top’, variants *gañ* or *gaiñ* would be expected to be found in the other dialects.

Lakarra (2005) puts forward another hypothesis, according to which *gan* might be cognate with the reconstructed ergative suffix *\*ga*, initially used with animate agents.

We are not in a position to conclude on this point, but we would like to mention that a common origin should perhaps be considered for *gan* as an element of the spatial endings of animate nouns and *ga-* as a hypothetical first formative of the Bizkaian comitative-instrumental case *-gaz*. Basque dialects other than Bizkaian have a comitative case formally analyzable as ‘genitive + *kin*’ and an instrumental case marked by *-z*. In Bizkaian, *-gaz* is now used both with animate and inanimate nouns, without any distinction between instrumental and comitative meanings (*gizonagaz* ‘with the man’, *kotxeagaz* ‘with the car’), but according to Azkue (1923–1925:321), Bizkaian *-ga-z* was originally the variant of the instrumental case *-z* with animate nouns. Semantically, this hypothesis is supported by the fact that, like spatial orienters, instruments are typically inanimate, and consequently additional morphological material in the instrumental case of animate nouns may have the same motivation as in the spatial cases.

## 7.2 The etymology of *baita*

It seems probable that, originally, *baita* specifically referred to the usual residence of a person, like the French preposition *chez*, since in the dialects that have it, this postposition constitutes the usual way to express ‘at N’s (a person) usual residence.’ The fact that *baita* is found as the second formative of oiconyms (in particular in the surroundings of Saint-Jean-de-Luz) suggests reconstructing \**baita* ‘house’. According to Azkue (1923–1925), *baita* would be cognate with Piedmontese *baita* ‘chalet’ and with similar words found in Occitan dialects and variously referring to tents, huts, etc.<sup>14</sup> There is, however, no direct evidence of the use of *baita* as a noun in Basque (Trask 1997: 208), which casts serious doubts on this explanation.

It must also be mentioned that the Basque dialects in which *baita* is attested also have a complementizer *bait*, used in particular in relativization, which in principle could be a possible source of ‘at N’s place’ < ‘at the place where N is’. Unfortunately, the constructions in which *bait* is found in relativizer function are such that it seems impossible to imagine a plausible grammaticalization path leading to “N-GEN + *baita*” ‘N’s place’. The question of the etymology of *baita* must therefore be left open.

## 8. Conclusion

In this paper, after surveying the cross-linguistic tendencies attested in the encoding of animates in spatial orienter function, we have discussed the possibility to reconstruct the history of the spatial forms specifically used for animate NPs in Basque. We have discussed the possible etymologies of the formatives *gan* and *baita* found in these forms and shown that the development of their use was conditioned not only by animacy hierarchy (pronouns > definitive singular animate nouns > definite plural or indefinite animate nouns), but also by the contrast between locative and the other two spatial cases (allative and ablative). In the history of Basque, the use of special forms with a heavier morphological marking for animates in contexts requiring the use of spatial cases became general in the allative and ablative cases before spreading to the locative. This relative conservatism of the locative, as opposed to the allative and ablative, calls for an explanation. Before going further in that direction it would be important to know whether this constitutes a cross-linguistically widespread tendency or not, and consequently we prefer to leave the question open. We observe however that something similar occurred in the history of Hungarian spatial cases: as already

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14. The possibility of a relationship with Semitic forms such as Arabic *bait* ‘house’ or Hebrew *beth* ‘house (of)’ is sometimes mentioned, but this constitutes most probably an accidental coincidence.

mentioned in the introduction, in Hungarian, an ancient form of the locative has been retained by a limited set of town names, which by contrast have not retained the ancient form of the allative or ablative.

Another interesting observation is that, in Basque, with respect to the maintenance of purely spatial uses with animate nouns, the spatial case that shows conservatism in resisting the tendency to avoid spatial cases of animate nouns in purely spatial functions is not the locative, but the allative. Here again, before trying to draw conclusions, it would be important to know whether a similar tendency has been observed in other languages.<sup>15</sup>

## Abbreviations

1	first person	IPFV	imperfective
2	second person	LOC	locative
3	third person	M	masculine
ABL	ablative	MTV	motivative
ADE	adessive	N	non-human (neuter)
ALL	allative	N <sup>+</sup>	non-human plural
CAUS	causative	NEG	negation
CFG	configuration marker	NMLZ	nominalizer
DEF	definite	PFV	perfective
ERG	ergative	PL	plural
FUT	future	POT	potential
GEN	genitive	PRS	present
H <sup>+</sup>	human plural	PTV	partitive
HORT	hortative	PST	past
HYP	hypothetical	RECP	reciprocal
IMP	imperative	REFL	reflexive
INDF	indefinite	REL	relativizer
INT	intensive	SG	singular

15. One of the reviewers suggested exploring Bybee's Conserving Effect as a possible explanation of the fact that allative is the only spatial case of Basque with purely spatial uses in combination with animate nouns. Unfortunately, as mentioned in Section 6.1, even the most ancient texts we have at our disposal include no attestation of either the locative or ablative in purely spatial uses with animate nouns, which precludes a corpus study of the loss of purely spatial uses by spatial cases combined with animate nouns. In addition to that, the hypothesis that the most frequent forms in usage are most likely to resist change was elaborated to explain morphological changes, and it is not clear whether (or how) it can be extended to changes in the uses of forms.

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