

A Syntactic Analysis of Rhetorical Questions

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1. Introduction

A rhetorical question (RQ: 1b) is viewed as a pragmatic reading of a genuine question (GQ: 1a).

- (1) a. Who helped John? [Mary, Peter, his mother, his brother, a neighbor, the police...]
b. Who helped John? [Speaker follows up: “Well, me, of course... who else?”]

Rohde (2006) and Caponigro & Sprouse (2007) view RQs as interrogatives biased in their answer set (1a = unbiased interrogative; 1b = biased interrogative). In unbiased interrogatives, the probability distribution of the answers is even.¹ The answer in RQs is biased because it belongs in the *Common Ground* (CG, Stalnaker 1978), a set of mutual or common beliefs shared by speaker and addressee. The difference between RQs and GQs is thus pragmatic. Let us refer to these approaches as Option A.

Sadock (1971, 1974) and Han (2002), by contrast, analyze RQs as no longer interrogative, but rather as *assertions of opposite polarity* (2a = 2b). Accordingly, RQs are not defined in terms of the properties of their answer set. The CG is not invoked. Let us call these analyses Option B.

- (2) a. Speaker says: “I did not lie.”
b. Speaker says: “Did I lie?” [Speaker follows up: “No! I didn’t!”]

For Han (2002: 222) RQs point to a pragmatic interface: “The representation at this level is not LF, which is the output of syntax, but more abstract than that. It is the output of further post-LF derivation via interaction with at least a sub part of the interpretational component, namely pragmatics.” RQs are not seen as syntactic objects, but rather as a post-syntactic interface phenomenon.

Rohde (2006) appears to straddle between Options A and B: “Because they invoke an answer set, RQs resemble interrogatives, but the obviousness of a particular answer implies the bias of an assertion” (p. 1). Let us call this approach AB.

The analysis of RQs as pragmatic readings (i.e., Options A, B, AB) is a long-standing assumption. Yet, surprisingly, RQs can be syntactically different from GQs, at least in Bellunese (Munaro & Obenauer 1998, Obenauer 2006), a dialect of Italian. M&O analyze three special interrogatives, characterized by special meanings (one is RQs), and syntactic differences (wh-movement). For example, in Bellunese GQs have wh-in situ (3a), while RQs have wh-movement (3b: Obenauer 2006: 6, ex. 17). Let us call M&O’s analysis Option C.

- (3) a. *À-lo fat par ti che?* *Ordinary question*
have-it done for you what
‘What has he done for you?’
b. *Cossa à-lo fat par ti?* *Special question, RQ type*
thing have-it done for you
‘What has he done for you?’ Nothing

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¹ van Rooy (2003), Rohde (2006) analyze the probability distribution of answer sets in terms of entropy. van Rooy (2003: 263) proposes that RQs are questions that have minimal informative value, or are valueless [entropy = 0].

In special interrogatives, *cosa* ‘thing’ replaces *che* ‘what’, suggesting that *cosa* meets a special licensing requirement that *che* is not able to satisfy (Obenauer 2006). *Che* in situ can also double with *cosa* in special interrogatives. Bellunese RQs thus present a challenging syntactic puzzle, for RQs in this language appear to be not an interface phenomenon, but a syntactic object different from GQs.

This paper presents corpus evidence from Basque, where certain readings of RQs are marked with mirative morphemes. In typological studies (DeLancey 1997, 2001, Aikhenvald 2004, 2012), mirativity is described as a grammatical category expressing speaker surprise or counter-expectation (§3). In Basque, these questions are marked with diverse disjunctive (correlative) conjunctions (e.g., *ala* ‘exclusive or’ in 4a, *ba* ‘if’ in 4b, *ote* < Latin *aut ne* ‘or not’, de Rijk 2008, in 4b and 4c), in a way reminiscent of Latin use of said conjunctions to identify biased interrogatives (e.g., *num/nonne* ‘whether’, *an* ‘or’... Allen & Greenough 1903, Pinkster 2015).

- (4) a. *Gezur(r)-a esan dut ala?*
 lie-ABS.SG say.PART AUX MIR (EXCLUSIVE OR)
 ‘Did I lie? [Of course I didn’t!]
- b. *Zer egin ote dut ba? Ezer ere ez!*
 What do.PART MIR AUX MIR (IF) Nothing also NEG
 ‘What did I do? Nothing!’
- c. *Nola-tan esan ote dut hori?*
 how-LOC say.PART MIR AUX that
 ‘How could I say something like that?’

In Basque corpus data, these markers are also employed in M&O’s special questions (§4). Independent evidence for the association of mirativity with special interrogatives is found in Paduan, an Italian dialect. Exceptional cases of subject clitic-verb inversion are found in negative contexts with mirative meaning (§2, Portner & Zanuttini 2000, though P&O do not treat these questions as different). Fiorentino (Garzonio 2004), another dialect of Italian, presents five special interrogatives marked with *o* (the disjunctive conjunction *or*, on account of evidence from *radopiamento*: Jacopo Garzonio, p.c.). The additional special questions are mirative-marked in Basque. Basque corpus data suggests that M&O’s/G’s special questions are *mirative interrogatives*. Do mirative interrogatives arise from pragmatic readings? The morphosyntactic evidence in Italian, Basque, and Latin warn against a pragmatic analysis, unless a pragmatic interface can have syntactic properties such as wh-movement, verb movement and lexical insertion (§5).

The corpus study provides new avenues to tackle the semantics of RQs. In particular, mirative interrogatives seem to encode the *antithesis* of the CG—speaker disagrees with addressee, self or third party—or (temporary) *acceptance* (Stalnaker 2002) of a CG believed not to be true. Semantic analyses of RQs have proposed the answer to a RQ lies in the CG (Opt. A). This paper proposes a unitary analysis of mirative interrogatives as *marked RQs* encoding disagreement. RQs give rise to the difficult question of how to handle cases where pragmatic notions, such as CG or its *antithesis*, appear to be represented in syntax in the absence of the relevant “pragmatic” projections to encode such notions syntactically (Tenny & Speas 2003, Giorgi 2010, Alcázar & Saltarelli 2014).

The structure of the paper follows. Section 2 completes the literature review with argumentation that RQs are questions rather than assertions, and the introduction of special questions in Bellunese and Paduan. Section 3 briefly introduces mirativity. Section 4 discusses Basque corpus data. Section 5 presents the analysis. Section 6 offers the conclusions and directions for further research.

2. Rhetorical Questions as Questions: Options A & C

C&S make two important observations in support of an analysis of RQs as questions. While their analysis assumes RQs are not a syntactic object different from GQs, their argumentation is compatible with Option C. First, “RQs allow for more than negative answers” (Caponigro & Sprouse 2007: 4; 4a). Second, “RQs allow for an answer, while statements do not” (p. 5; 4b).

- (4) SPEAKER: It's understandable that Luca adores Mina. *After all, who helped him when he was in trouble?*
 ADDRESSEE or SPEAKER: Mina/#Nobody (2' cf. ex. 12 in C&S, p. 4)
- (5) SPEAKER: *After all, Mina was the only one to help him when he was in trouble!*
 ADDRESSEE or SPEAKER: #Mina (2'' cf. C&S, p. 4, ex. 12 modified like 10)

Munaro & Obenauer (1999), Obenauer (2006) analyze certain special questions in Bellunese (3b, 6b, 7b) that are syntactically different from ordinary questions (3a; 6a, 7a cf. Obenauer 2006: p. 3, ex. 6, p. 6, exs. 17, 19). These have in common with the RQ type (3) obligatory wh-movement.

- (6) a. *Sé-tu drio magnar che?! Ordinary question*
 are-you behind eat what
 'What are you eating?'
- b. *Cossa sé-tu drio magnar?! Special question, Surprise-disapproval type*
 What are-you behind eat
 'What (on earth) are you eating?!'
- (7) a. *l'à-tu catà andè? Ordinary question*
 it-have-you found where
 'Where did you find it?'
- b. *Andè l'à-tu catà? Special question, Can't-find-the-value-of-x type*
 where it-have-you found
 'Where (the hell) did you find it?'

For Obenauer (2006), special questions activate an XP in the left periphery above the projections activated by ordinary questions. Section 5 provides further details.

The relation between mirativity and special questions noted for Basque has also been described in arguably "mirative" terms for Paduan (Portner & Zanuttini 2000), albeit without acknowledging these questions are RQs or special questions syntactically different from ordinary questions. Paduan has subject clitic-verb inversion in affirmative polar interrogatives (8a vs. 8b). P&Z make the following observation: "Interestingly, though subject-clitic [-verb] inversion is obligatory in matrix interrogative clauses, it yields ungrammaticality in the presence of preverbal *no* [8c]" (Portner & Zanuttini 2000: 196; exs. 3a, 3b, 6a, pp. 196-7). The same holds for wh-Qs.

- (8) a. *El vien*
 s.cl comes
 'He is coming'
- b. *Vien-lo (*El vien?)*
 comes-s.cl
 'Is he coming?'
- c. *No (e)l vien?*
 NEG s.cl comes
 'Isn't he coming?'

P&Z note four contexts where inversion takes place in spite of the presence of *no* (see references therein). Given the words chosen to describe it (surprise, counter-expectation, dismay), it seems fair to claim all exceptions are mirative (Portner & Zanuttini 2000: 198-200, exs. 10-15). The pattern extends to exclamatives (9: ex. 15, p. 200; ex. 11a, p. 199).

- (9) a. *No ga-lo magnà tuto!*
 Neg has-s.cl eaten everything
 'He's eaten everything!'
- b. *Parcossa no ve-to anca ti?*
 why NEG go-s.cl also you
 'Why aren't you going as well?'

Four other arguments for Option C are not exemplified for reasons of space. In egophoric systems (Hale 1980, Hargreaves 1990), RQs differ from GQs in the choice of person morphemes—RQs pattern with declaratives.² The second argument concerns a path of grammaticalization from mirative to RQ marker to question marker.³ The RQ-marker is reserved for disagreement. It does not mark or identify RQs where the answer is in the CG. The third and fourth arguments concern a different relation with negation and negative polarity items (see §6).

3. What is mirativity?

English lacks the category. A recent sad event can help us introduce mirativity (10).

- (10) a. “Prince dies at age 57.” (*USA Today*, April 21, 2016.)
 b. “Oh my god! Prince died last night! I can’t believe it!”

His passing was *unexpected, surprising, hard to believe, difficult to come to terms with*. Yet (10a) is a true statement. It represents a reality the reader ignored, at that time. English lacks a means to express the italicized descriptors, but other languages feature a grammatical category known as mirativity.

Mirativity is independent of evidentiality (DeLancey 1997, 2001), although the same morpheme may be interpreted as evidential (source of information, such as a report or inference, hearsay, Aikhenvald 2004) or mirative in many languages. Aikhenvald (2012: 436) seems to have settled the differences between these two categories in favor of DeLancey’s position: “In many languages, expressions of mirativity have no grammatical connection to evidential systems. Markers with “mirative” meanings co-occur with evidentials, they occupy different positions in verb structure and differ in their interrelation with other categories (such as negation, counterexpectation)”.

When evidentials express mirativity, pairings of mirativity with indirect evidence (reportatives, inferentials) are common (Balkan languages, Friedman 2000; Aikhenvald 2004). In Basque this pairings are also attested in that some of the miratives can express inference/conjecture in the present or in the recent history of the language (Azkue 1925, Lafitte 1962).⁴

The latest typological survey is Aikhenvald (2012). Aikhenvald proposes *five recurrent meanings of mirativity*: “(i) sudden discovery, revelation, realization; (ii) surprise; (iii) unprepared mind; (iv) counterexpectation; (v) new information.” All of these characteristics (i-v) are found in the example provided in (10a), although, in spoken language, mirativity is expressed by the speaker (10b). Overtones of lack of speaker control, volitionality, awareness or intentionality add to these meanings (DeLancey 1997, 2001, Aikhenvald 2004). Again, the exs. provided in (10) illustrate these aspects of the meaning of mirativity. In Sino-Tibetan languages and Tsafiki mirativity arises from using the *disjunct* instead of the *conjunct* person marker (DeLancey 1997, 2001; Dickinson 2000). Aikhenvald observes that said overtones associate with mirativity specifically, not evidentiality: “mirative overtones are often interconnected with the speaker’s lack of control and lack of awareness of what is going on” (Aikhenvald 2004: 208). Consider evidentiality and mirativity in Tabo: “Unlike the two

² Two questions left for further research are whether the RQ-declarative symmetry is (i) supportive of Option B (it would require post-syntactic lexical insertion), and whether RQ-declarative symmetry (ii) only happens in cases when RQs are *mirative interrogatives* (this could be the case in Tsafiki, Dickinson 2000). In effect, this pattern (*disjunct* in place of *conjunct* person marker) is the means to indicate mirativity outside questions in egophoric systems (i.e., the point of departure for DeLancey’s work). It is thus a plausible research avenue.

³ Widespread use of disjunctive conjunctions as question markers (Haspelmath et alios 2001) may originate in miratives. This seems to be the case of Basque *-a* and *al* (from mirative *ala*, considering data in Azkue 1925 and Lafitte 1962 for Spanish and French Basque, respectively) and Latin question marker *ne*, which originally was a biased question marker in Early Latin (cf. Pinkster 2015), and remained a redundant marker of biased interrogatives (*numne, nonne, anne*). A similar development is found in Tucanoan languages, but from nominalizers used as miratives and inferentials (Idiatov & van der Auwera 2008, and references therein). Parallel developments are underway in Spanish *acaso* ‘perhaps’; Catalan *o* ‘or’ in counter-expectational questions (Minorcan Catalan, Pilar Prieto, p.c.; Mayorcan Catalan, Mónica Marcos-Llinás, p.c.).

⁴ Although often ignored in English grammars of Latin, some Latin biased question markers display similar behavior (e.g., *an, anne* cf. Gaffiot 1937 in French; Casenave-Harigile 2002 in Basque).

miratives, evidentials in Tabo do not display any straightforward correlations with controlled vs. non-controlled or intentional vs. unintentional actions” (Aikhenvald 2012: 453).

Miratives have been associated to exclamatives (Aikhenvald 2012). Their meaning is perhaps best reproduced in this clause type in English (10b). There are some anecdotal reports in Aikhenvald (2012) that miratives relate to RQs, not GQs (where evidentials may be found instead). In at least one case, she reports that the mirative is homophonous with a question marker (see fn. 3 in the current paper).

In Basque corpus data, miratives abound in interrogatives (RQs), exclamatives, indirect questions, purpose clauses, complements of verbs of avoidance and fear⁵, and a certain mirative construction (Alcázar 2016a), which is also found in European Spanish and Catalan (Anna Pineda, p.c.). With particular reference to the interpretation of mirative interrogatives, it seems that lack of control of speaker over reality itself (10a), point of view of addressee or a third party (4a, 4b), or a reality or perspective the speaker pits himself or herself against (4c), plays a central role.

The temporal frame of mirativity is the preceding discourse or a recent event (10). The mirative reaction (i-v) appears to be anchored to utterance time, as upon reading (10a) or uttering (10b). In Sino-Tibetan languages, temporal and aspectual metaphors encode mirativity, such as using a *present for a past* or an *imperfect for a perfect* (Zeisler 2000). Rarely, mirativity is reported to refer to the past (Tsafiki, Dickinson 2000; Quechua, Cusihamán 1976), or the future (Quechua riddles & challenges, Floyd 1996, Aikhenvald 2004). In these cases too, the mirative reaction seems anchored to utterance time (though Floyd 1996, Aikhenvald 2004 argue surprise happens in the addressee upon discovering whether their answer is right in riddles). In this way, it appears that mirativity is deictic, or presents strong restrictions in its temporal frame (as, for example, imperatives, Alcázar & Saltarelli 2014).

In contrast to typological descriptions, in Basque corpus data, reference to (distant) past and (imminent) future is frequent. The mirative reaction remains anchored to utterance time. There appear to be no reports where mirativity refers to hypothetical events. In Basque corpus data, nonetheless, mirativity refers to hypothetical events in legal docs. In legal docs and scientific writing, the use of miratives does not associate to surprise, emotions or subjectivity. This is a significant departure from mirativity as described in the typological literature and worthy of further investigation.

4. Mirative interrogatives in Basque corpora

This paper presents data and analysis of a study of Basque miratives sampled from corpora published online by the University of the Basque Country. It includes translations of Noam Chomsky’s *Syntactic Structures*, Steven Pinker’s *The Language Instinct*, *Anne Frank’s Diary*, *Harry Potter* books by J. K. Rowling, the *Bible*, legal docs, newspapers, scripts of a TV series, a diachronic corpus, and two tetralingual parallel corpora (Basque-French-English-Spanish), among other resources.

Basque RQs (11b) can be indistinguishable from GQs (11a), as in English (1).⁶

- (11) a. *Nor-k lagun-du zion Jon-i?* [Mary, Peter, his mother, his brother, ...]
 who-ERG.SG help-PART AUX Jon-DAT.SG
 ‘Who helped John?’
- b. *Nor-k lagun-du zion Jon-i? Ni-k, noski.*
 who-ERG.SG help-PART AUX Jon-DAT.SG I-ERG.SG of.course
 ‘Who helped John? Me, of course’

Basque RQs fall into two types: unmarked (11b) and mirative-marked RQs (4; RQs and M-RQs for short). Basque RQ semantics seems to go along the same lines as the semantic descriptions for English RQs; that is, their answer belongs in the CG (with Opt. A): “In the simple picture, the common ground is just common or mutual belief, and what a speaker presupposes is what she believes to be common or mutual belief. The common beliefs of the parties to a conversation are the beliefs they share, and that they recognize that they share.” (Stalnaker 2002: 704). This is the case of (11b), on a reading where speaker and addressee agree that the speaker was the person that helped John.

⁵ Latin *ne* functioned as a complementizer for these particular verbs (Allen & Greenough 1903, Pinkster 2015).

⁶ RQs & GQs do not differ in verb movement in Basque. Hualde & Ortiz de Urbina (2003) note, in passing, that in Old Basque RQs would not have auxiliary fronting under negation.

However, Basque RQs can also express ‘antithesis of the CG’ (\neq beliefs) with similar frequency. In (11b), the speaker may follow up with the same answer *vehemently* if he or she assumes, expects, knows, or believes that the addressee or a third party disagrees. This seems to be true of English as well (pace Opt. A). For example, (2b) can be read as the speaker thinking the addressee disagrees with him or her. Likewise, (1b) could have a different follow up by the speaker, such as a vehement “Me! Me!” if he or she expected the addressee to disagree and the speaker felt frustrated as a result. Thus, on reflection, English RQs can express both agreement and disagreement, as Basque RQs. *Agreement* and *disagreement* are used loosely in this context to refer to CG and its antithesis.

Basque M-RQs, by contrast, are more intriguing. These are not readable as CG in the contexts found in diverse corpus samples (if they are, they would be a rare or marginal interpretation at best). Instead, they seem to be limited to antithesis of the CG, as defined in (12) below.

- (12) a. *Speaker & addressee* differ (e.g., correction, imprecation, disbelief, vehemence, sarcasm...).
- b. Correction, imprecation... is directed to third party. *Addressee* may agree with *speaker* or not.
- c. *Speaker* disagrees with self; self-correction, self-imprecation, doubt, deliberation...

Latin subjunctives/infinitives in RQs merited similar labels: *repudiative*, *deliberative*, *dubitative* (Allen & Greenough 1903, Pinkster 2015). Other attested uses include make-believe with children or child’s play (e.g., researcher-child dialogues in Steven Pinker’s *The Language Instinct*, describing research on child language), or in questions with no known answer (yet); say, “Who broke into my car?” or “What does God want for us to do?”. This paper focuses on the more salient and frequent use as disagreement. Exs. (4a) and (4b) could be interpreted as (12a) or (12b). Ex. (4c) is interpreted as (12c).

4.1. Munaro & Obenauer’s (1998) special questions of Bellunese in Basque corpora

M-RQs were illustrated in (4). This subsection presents exs. of M&O’s other special questions.

The type *Can’t-find-the-value-of-x* (13-15) is the most frequent type in the Goenkale Corpus (Script collection of TV drama *Goenkale*). It is common to use miratives in contexts where an object is lost (13, prominently keys), when one is attempting to remember where something was said or seen (14), and with the idiomatic expression *where is my head?* (15). Collocations with swear words (e.g., *demontre* ‘the hell’) are frequent. All examples of this kind appear to choose mirative marker *ote*. Some of these examples could be characterized as questions for which there is no known answer yet.

- (13) a. Episode 2049. KOMENIENTZIAK EZKONDU GINTUEN
JUNE: ‘Where *the hell* did I put my keys’
Non demontre sartu ote ditut giltzak?
- b. Episode XIV-125. MAITASUNAK ZIRIA ZORROTZ!
IMANOL: ‘My keys...my house keys. Where did I put them?’
Giltzak... etxeko giltzak. Non sartu ote ditut?
- (14) a. Episode 228. BERRI TXARRAK
SATUR: ‘(Looking up) Where did I hear that?’
(Gora begira) Non entzun ote dut nik hori?
- b. Episode 1687. NOR DA, NOR, GOGOAN DUZUNA?
DON LUIS: ‘Oh, yes, this one yes’ (Starts thinking) Where did I see it?’
A bai, hau bai! (Pentsatzen jartzen da) Non ikusi ote dut nik...?
- (15) a. Episode 440. AMODIOAK ETA DESAMODIOAK
PETRA: ‘Oh, mom, I’m sorry! Where is my head?’
Ai, ama, barkatu! Non ote dut burua?
- b. Episode 604. IRAGANAREN DEIA
AMAIA: ‘Oh, Where is my head? (Gives them the right key, nervous, hand shaking)’
Ai! Non ote dut nik burua. (Giltza ona ematen die, larri, eskua daldarka).

These M-RQs could be seen as simply mirative in relation to the meanings (i-v) described by Aikhenvald (2012). They could also be understood as the speaker and addressee having different beliefs about the whereabouts of a particular object when the addressee presents the object to the

speaker, or when the addressee reminds the speaker about where or when something was said or seen. The examples that involve remembering, or attempting to remember (the speaker will succeed in remembering or not in the imminent future), are similar to mirativity in indirect questions as well as a certain mirative construction, where temporal reference tends to be (imminent) future.

The *surprise-disapproval question* (16-19) is, in the Basque corpus data, better labeled more diversely as corrective, accusatory, imprecatory, vehement or sarcastic, among other salient uses. The questions in the sample may, but need not involve surprise. They can be impromptu attacks, as in (16), where a father lashes out against his son as he leaves for school, without previous provocation (it is a TV drama). Often, such questions are coupled with irony, sarcasm, anger or frustration, with or without surprise. All examples for the illustration of this type involve *ote*. They were also extracted from the Goenkale Corpus. Stage directions point to how these lines are to be rendered.

- (16) a. Episode 453. EGOERA ARGITU BEHARRA
IMANOL. ‘(Too harshly) What *the hell* will you learn today?’
(*Gogorregi*) *Zer demontre ikasiko ote duzu zuk gaur.*
- b. Episode 417. PRIMERAKO MENUA
ANE. ‘What (you think) you know?’
Zer jakingo ote duzu zuk?

The *Bible*, for example, uses this type of M-RQ primarily to express *vehemence*, often with reverse polarity in the answer expected. Sometimes marking is systematic (17a, 17c); sometimes it is cued (17b). Recall that unmarked RQs can also express disagreement [as in 17b].

- (17) a. *Ez ote naiz libre? Ez ote naiz apostolu? Ez ote dut ikusi Jesus gure Jauna? Ez ote da nire lanaren fruitu zuek kristau izatea?*
‘Aren’t I free? Aren’t I an apostol? Haven’t I seen Jesus our lord? Isn’t the fruit of my labor that you are Christians?’
- b. *Ez ote dituzue zeuen etxeak jateko eta edateko? Ala gutxietsi egin nahi duzue Jainkoaren eliz elkarte eta lotsarazi ezer ez dutenak? Zer esan diezazuket? Zorionak eman? Gai honetan ezin dizuet zorionik eman.*
‘Don’t you have [*ote*] your homes to eat and drink? Or did you reject the society of the churches of God and make those who have nothing feel ashamed of themselves? What can I tell you? Congratulate you? On this I cannot congratulate you.’
- c. *Edo sutu egin nahi ote dugu Jainkoaren haserrea? Bera baino indartsuago ote gara?*
‘Or do we want to fuel God’s wrath? Are we stronger than him?’

This *surprise-disapproval* type, in its diverse uses, can be self-addressed (12c, 18, 19), like RQs. In the translation of *Anne Frank’s Diary*, these questions bear miratives in questions that can be also labeled as deliberative or dubitative, sometimes presented with self-accusation or repudiation.

- (18) Episode 642. *Eskaintzak.*
EDURNE: ‘Come on... Forget about it, Imanol. I went too far...’
‘How could I say [*ote*] that, having the family I have?’
Nolatan esan ote dut hori, daukadan familia edukita?
‘Nobody is happier than me.’
- (19) ‘I know I’m far from being what I should; Will I ever be?’
Badakit asko falta zaidala oraindik izan beharko nukeen bezalakoa izateko. Iritsiko ote naiz inoiz halakoa izatera?’

5. Analysis: Mirative Phrase and deictic features

Obenauer (2006) reasons that, because *cos* can double with *che*-in situ, in special questions wh-words move to a high projection in the left periphery. For O this projection is above [Spec, ForceP] if Poletto & Pollock (2004) are right and apparent cases of wh-in situ in Italian are the result of remnant movement. Garzonio (2004) shows *o* can appear to the left of a hanging topic, thus above ForceP. Giorgi (2016) shows for Italian that clitic left dislocated phrases appear to the right of *ma* ‘but’, a

marker of certain counter-expectational questions; hence, this form also lies above ForceP. The position realized is high. But the nature of this projection has not yet been clearly identified.

With reference to Basque, the M-RQ markers seem to be in a process of grammaticalization where the mirative eventually becomes a rhetorical question marker (properly, a M-RQ marker), then a question marker. At the final stage, the morpheme tends to be a proclitic on the finite verb or auxiliary. It is at this point where, arguably, the miratives have reanalyzed as an illocutionary marker, a value of ForceP. Earlier, the miratives function as a sentence final particle, some with parenthetical uses. The M-RQ markers are miratives.

If the special questions of Munaro & Obenauer, Garzonio are *mirative interrogatives*, the logical candidate for this high projection would be a Mirative Phrase. Evidentiality and related meanings are recognized as independent functional projections under the cartographic approach (Cinque 1999). The typological literature argues for mirativity to be a grammatical category independent of evidentiality. Considering its independent morphological realization, and its relationship to checking operations in Bellunese and Paduan, it seems fair to claim that mirativity heads its own functional projection. This position is above ForceP. But its proximity to ForceP may enable the gradual reanalysis of a mirative into a question marker. This could explain the relationship between RQ markers and question markers.

What features does mirativity possess that are licensed by movement? A careful examination of the typological descriptions points to deictic features in mirativity. The meanings of mirativity (i-v) are either experienced by the speaker or by the addressee. The choice can be constrained by structure. In questions, evidential and mirative morphemes may evaluate relative to the addressee, rather than the speaker (see San Roque et alios, to appear). While the temporal frame of mirativity can be more diverse in Basque, the mirative reaction seems to be anchored to utterance time, systematically. Arguably, the points of view, or realities (presumed or factual), juxtaposed by the insertion of mirative morphology, could be formally approached by world variables in a context of utterance. In that sense, points of view could be construed as deictic.

Obenauer (2006) argues that in Bellunese *che* is defective for the feature that that *cosso* can check. In light of Basque corpus data and deictic properties of mirativity such feature could be deictic.

Why do RQs differ from GQs in meanings related to CG? Mirative marking points to deixis as a potential answer. While deixis is seen as a pragmatic construct (Kaplan 1978), recent work proposes it is structural (Schlenker 1999, Tenny & Speas 2003, Bianchi 2003, Giorgi 2010, Alcázar & Saltarelli 2014, Déschaine & Wiltschko, Ms.). The evidence adduced concerns diverse phenomena such as logophoricity, indexical shift, egophoricity, imperatives or Basque allocutives (argumental verbal agreement of a presumed non-argumental addressee). A *context of utterance* would represent speaker, addressee, time, place and world variables. If such deictic projection(s) were to be represented in RQs, M-RQs and/or special questions, there would be cause for these to code contextual notions (CG, *lack of CG, acceptance*) in contrast to GQs. Morphosyntactic differences would then follow from the realization and licensing of these projections by movement operations.

Without some difference in structural apparatus, Basque, Italian and Latin data are a syntactic chimera. Yet the structural apparatus to capture such differences may be seen as a chimera itself. More research into the left periphery (Rizzi 1997, Cinque 1999) is necessary to ascertain the need for such projections in the larger context of a cartographic approach to syntactic structure.

6. Conclusion and directions for further research

While Basque mirative interrogatives provide further evidence for Option C, it remains an open question whether such interrogatives constitute a *minor speech act* (in the sense of Sadock & Zwicky 1985, see Alcázar 2016a), or a genuine universal type, visible with mirative morphology and/or asymmetric verb/wh-movement in GQs/RQs. This is not tantamount to saying that in other languages RQs could not arise as pragmatic readings (pace Option A and B). Other languages under suspicion of featuring a RQ type include German (Bayer & Obenauer 2011) and Japanese (Oguro 2014), among others. Sadock & Zwicky's (1985) seminal paper on speech act distinctions in syntax considers RQs as a subtype of interrogative clause. This suggests this type was relatively frequent in their sample.

Absent wh-movement, mirativity optionally distinguishes M-RQs & GQs/RQs. English does not distinguish RQs from GQs, as it features wh-movement and lacks mirativity. Echo-questions/

quotatives (e.g., you said *what?*), nonetheless, feel natural as M-RQs (consider the meanings in 12). In this regard, note that Oushiro (2011) reports that *wh*-in situ is (probabilistically) favored in semi-rhetorical questions in Brazilian Portuguese, which she analyzes in terms of the CG as well. In structures with *wh*-movement English has means to distinguish RQs from GQs, at least in the form of tests (RQ: ‘after all’, *yet* answer; GQ: ‘by any chance’ cf. Sadock 1971, 1974).

Many questions raised by RQs have not been addressed in this paper. RQs and GQs are known to exhibit asymmetries in the licensing of negative polarity items (van Rooy 2003, Guerzoni 2004). The relationship of RQs to the category of negation (Laka 1990, Zanuttini 1997) and, in some cases, its apparent reversal in polarity (Sadock 1971, 1974), merits detailed investigation. It is important to observe that this property can become grammaticalized. For example, Latin *num* expects a negative answer while *nonne* expects a positive answer (Allen & Greenough 1903). This property, which was exhibited by *ne* in Latin when it was a biased question marker, in either polarity value (Pinkster 2015), was lost when *ne* became a question marker. Reverse polarity is also found in exclamatives (Portner & Zanuttini 2000), which are a locus of mirative sighting across languages (Aikhenvald 2012). Both of these seemingly structural characteristics could, in theory, be more naturally explored in Option C.

The syntactic representation of RQs, and its feature specification, may be varied, considering the multiple options Basque miratives afford: *ala*, *ote*, *ba* (4), *akaso* (borrowed from Spanish *acaso* ‘perhaps’ in the 18th C.), *edo* ‘or’ and *ea* ‘whether’ (used in some dialects as an RQ marker cf. Etymological Basque Dictionary, online). Examination of complex mirative systems, such as Basque, and their relation to interrogatives, may shed light on the semantics of this unfamiliar category.

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