

***Are adpositional phrases any other than adjuncts?***  
***A case study on the argument structure of Basque motion verbs***

**Abstract**

Cross-linguistically, adpositional phrases (both containing prepositions and postpositions) have been described as adjuncts, while noun phrases have been characterized as verb arguments, the required elements. However, certain verbs accept adpositional phrases as arguments (Huddleston & Pullum 2002). A given sentence like *the accident occurred at the corner* would be ungrammatical without the adpositional phrase (*\*the accident occurred*). When it comes to Basque (an isolate language in south-western Europe), there are three arguments that can display verb agreement; the subject (S), the direct object (DO) and the indirect object (IO). This agreement is reflected in verb morphology, for example, in *gabiltza* ('we walk') the subject-verb agreement is expressed by the initial *ga-* (1.PL) morpheme. However, both transitive and intransitive motion verbs (*eraman* 'bring', *jaso* 'receive') require adpositional phrases to be grammatical (*gu etxera goaz* 'we go home' vs *\*Gu goaz* 'we go').

Since the canonical word order in Basque follows a SOV (S-IO-DO-V) pattern, the closer to the verb the more important a complement will be. In this sense, the position in which adpositional phrases appear will determine whether they are part of the argument structure of a given verb. In addition, adpositional phrases can cause a thematic-role overlap with the indirect object. Within the adpositional set, Goal-denoting ('to') adpositions are less frequently omitted than Source-denoting ('from') ones (Landau & Lakusta 2011). In Basque, the indirect object (dative *-ri*) can denote both the benefactive and goal roles, overlapping with the adlative adposition *-ra* ('to') also denoting the goal role (Fernández & Ortiz de Urbina 2010). Some other authors suggest that goal and benefactive/recipient roles have a common analysis (Arregi & Ormazabal 2003) following Pykkänen's (2008) approach.

In order to understand whether adpositional phrases can be arguments of motion verbs I have recently conducted two choice task experiments. Participants had to choose the position an adpositional phrase should have in transitive and ditransitive sentences. As a result, both Source- and Goal-denoting adpositions have been placed closer than the indirect object. But which is more important, Goal-denoting adpositional phrases have been placed just before the verb, where the direct object was expected, pushing in favour of their argumental nature.

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