

AM3a — Grammar of Basque

Practical information

Time	Tuesdays 14:00–16:00
Place	Haus 14:0.09
Website	http://www.luisvicente.net/teaching/am3a-ss13 (ask me for the password to the protected readings).
Instructor	Dr. Luis Vicente.
Office	Haus 14:3.29
Email	vicente@uni-potsdam.de
Office hours	by email appointment or check http://www.luisvicente.net/schedule and check if I'm free.

Course description

Basque is an isolate language spoken in the parts of Spain and France that surround the Bay of Biscay. It is one of the oldest languages of Europe and among the very few that don't belong to the Indo-European family. Its syntax exhibits various properties that appear alien to speakers of the more common Romance and/or Germanic languages —e.g., a very large number of cases organized on an ergative-absolutive system, a very complex system of three-way agreement with “agreement displacement” under certain circumstances, and a word order dependent mostly on discourse factors. In this course, we will spend a substantial amount of time looking at these peculiar properties of Basque, situating them within a larger theory of typology and trying to determine its implications for theoretical linguistics.

This course presupposes that you have passed BM2, VM2, and VM3a, and that you remember most of the things you learned there.

Pass requirements

Hausarbeit: 50% You are free whatever topic you want, provided it is non-trivially related to what we see in the course. The Hausarbeit is due on August 31 and it will have to be between 10 and 15 pages long (12pt font, single-spaced, 2.5cm margins on all four sides). Collaborative Hausarbeiten are possible, provided both that (i) the length increases proportionally to the number of co-authors; and (ii) each co-author's contribution is clearly delimited.

Class presentation: 25% The last two weeks of the course are reserved for presentations of the preliminary work that students have done towards their Hausarbeit. You don't have to present a finished product, but you have to show evidence that you have done some preliminary research on the topic you've chosen and that you know what else you need to do. To ensure that you satisfy this requirement, on May 20 you will have to hand in a one-page summary of your prospective Hausarbeit, which will contain (i) a succinct (500 words

maximum) statement of your topic; and (ii) a list of the literature you have consulted or plan to consult. If you have problems identifying a suitable topic, contact me as soon as possible.

Reading assignments: 25% On the last class of April, May, and June, I will assign an article or book chapter alongside a list of questions to test your understanding of the article. You will have to return the answers to me by email at the latest on the evening of the immediately following Sunday. This is so that I can read your answers on Monday and comment them on the following class.

Schedule

Date	Topic
April 9	Introduction to Basque: historical and social aspects; major dialects; French-Spanish contact effects.
April 16	Basics of morpho-phonology.
April 23	Overview of Basque clause structure.
April 30	Word order variation (I). <i>Reading assignment #1</i>
May 7	Word order variation (II).
May 14	no class: Luis in the Netherlands
May 21	Word order variation (III). <i>Hand in Hausarbeit prospect</i>
May 28	Case (I) <i>Reading assignment #2</i>
June 4	Case (II)
June 11	Agreement (I)
June 18	Agreement (II)
June 25	Agreement (III) <i>Reading assignment #3</i>
July 2	student presentations
July 9	student presentations

Literature

The course will draw to some extent on the following two reference books. You are advised to look through them for inspiration of possible Hausarbeit topics.

- Hualde, José Ignacio, and Jon Ortiz de Urbina. 2003. *A grammar of Basque*. Berlin: Mouton.
- de Rijk, Rudolph. 2007. *Basque: a progressive grammar*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

In addition, we will also read the following books and articles. I will make them available as necessary. A more comprehensive reading list will be provided on a class-by-class basis.

- Arregi, Karlos. 2002. Focus on Basque movements. Doctoral dissertation, MIT.
- Arregi, Karlos, and Andrew Nevins. 2012. *Morphotactics*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Elordieta, Arantzazu. 2001. Word order and constituent permutation in Basque. Doctoral dissertation, Leiden University.
- Etxepare, Ricardo. 2005. Number long distance agreement in substandard Basque. *ASJU*.

- Laka, Itziar. 1990. Negation in syntax. Doctoral dissertation, MIT.
- Ortiz de Urbina, Jon. 1989. *Parameters in the grammar of Basque*. Dordrecht: Foris.
- Ortiz de Urbina, Jon. 2002. Focus of correction and remnant movement in Basque. *Erramu Boneta*, UPV/EHU.
- Rezac, Milan. 2005. Elements of cyclic syntax. Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto.
- Rezac, Milan. 2008. The syntax of eccentric agreement. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 26.
- Vicente, Luis. 2005. Licensing objects with and without movement. *Proceedings of WCCFL 24*.