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Language: Basque

Relative Clauses in Basque

STRATEGIES

Strategy 1:

a. Is the relative clause finite or non-finite?

The relative clause is finite.

b. What is the form of the relativized NP within the relative clause?

The form of the relativized NP within the relative clause is gapping.

c. Is a subordinator used?

Yes, a complementizer *-(e)n* is attached to verbs. It is worth to mention that there is a strong word order in Basque. Verbs with the complementizer should occur at the end of the relative clause.

d. What is the position of the relative clause with respect to the head?

The position of the relative clause is prenominal. Nowadays, postnominal modifiers occur only in some eastern dialects, thus, are not analysed in this assignment.

e. Functions the head noun have within the relative clause (with examples):

Function – subject

(1)

[Pello-k ekarr-i d-u-en] diru-a galdu d-u-t.

Peter-ERG bring-PERF TAM-have-COMP money-DEF lose TAM-have-1SG.ERG

'I lost the money Peter brought.'

(Hualde & Urbina, 2003:764)

(2)

[merkatu-a-n eros-i d-it-u-zu-n] sagarr-a-k.

Market-DEF-LOC buy-PERF TAM-3PL.ABS-have-2SG.ERG-COMP apple-DEF-PL

'the apples that you bought in the market.'

(Hualde & Urbina, 2003:765)

(3)

[Gerta daiteke-en] amets horreta-n euskara ikuste-n d-u-gu...
happen TAM.have.3SG-COMP dream that-LOC Basque see-IMPERF TAM-have-1PL.ERG

'In this dream which can happen we see the Basque language...'

(Hualde & Urbina, 2003:776)

Function – recipient

(4)

[gizon-a -k liburu-a eman d-i-o-n] emakume-a.
man-DEF-ERG book-DEF give TAM-have-3SG.DAT-COMP woman-DEF

'the woman that the man has given the book to'

(Shopen, 1985:145)

(5)

Ezagutze-n al d-u-zu [liburu-a-k eskatu dizkiod-n] gizon-a?
Know-IMPERF Q TAM-have-2SG.ERG book-DEF-PL ask.for TAM.have.3PL.ABS-COMP man-DEF

'Do you know the man who I asked for the books?'

(Hualde & Urbina, 2003:777)

Function – oblique

(6)

[sagarr-a-k eros-i d-it-u-zu-n] Merkatu-a.
apple-DEF-PL buy-PERF TAM-3PL.ABS-have-2SG.ERG-COMP market-DET

'the market where you bought the apples'

(Hualde & Urbina, 2003:765)

(7)

[Hauek biz-i zir-en] bailar-a-k zortzi etxe zituen.
These live-PERF were-COMP valley-DEF-ERG eight house had

'The valley where they lived had eight houses.'

(Hualde & Urbina, 2003:778)

(8)

[zinkurin-az daud-n] min-a tipienet-a-rik bait-a
lament-INSTR TAM.be.3SG-COMP pain-DEF smallest-PL-ABL bait-is
'that the pain they are complaining about is very small'

(Hualde & Urbina, 2003:777)

Function – possessor

(9)

[Izen-a ahantz-i duda-n] gizon bat-ek erran d-i-t.
Name-DEF forget-PERF TAM.have.3SG-COMP man a-ERG tell TAM-have-1SG.DAT
'A man (whose) name I have forgotten told me.'

(Hualde & Urbina, 2003:780)

Strategy 2:

Important: these clauses sometimes are analysed as complement clauses instead of relative clauses.

a. Is the relative clause finite or non-finite?

The relative clause is non-finite.

b. What is the form of the relativized NP within the relative clause?

The form of the relativized NP within the relative clause is gapping.

c. Is a subordinator used?

Yes, only a relational suffix *-ko* is attached to verbs.

d. What is the position of the relative clause with respect to the head?

The position of the relative clause is prenominal.

e. Functions the head noun have within the relative clause (with examples):

Function – agent

(10)

[Trafiko-a zaintz-e-ko] ertzainak heldu d-ir-a.
Traffic-DEF direct-NMZ-REL policemen arrive TAM-PL-3SG
'Policemen to direct the traffic have arrived.'

(Hualde & Urbina, 2003:793)

Important: the following examples apply only to some eastern dialects. These relative clauses are participial.

Function – subject

(11) (note: the verb is already the participle in its bare form)

[Baiona-ko Ospitale-a-n ikus-i] etsenplu, ibilmolde miresgarri-a-k.

Bayonne-REL hospital-DEF-LOC see-PERF example behavior admirable-DET-PL

'the admirable examples and behaviors I saw in the Hospital of Bayonne'

(Hualde & Urbina, 2003:790)

(12)

[bera-k bakarrik egin-da-ko] erakusket-a-n.

he-ERG alone make-PART-REL exhibition-DEF-LOC

'in the exhibition that he himself put together'

(Hualde & Urbina, 2003:791)

Function – agent

(13) (note: occurs in ambiguous contexts)

[atzo ikusi-ta-ko] gizon-a-k.

yesterday see-PART-REL men

'the men who saw X yesterday'

(Hualde & Urbina, 2003:792)

Function – oblique

(14)

[liranja eta zitroin lor-ez egini-ka-ko] usain gozo bat.

orange and lemon flower-INSTR make-PART-REL smell good a

'a good smell made of orange and lemon flowers'

(Hualde & Urbina, 2003:791)

Strategy 3: (used rarely)

Important: this strategy is proposed by some modern grammarians. Even though it can be useful “when the relativized NP is embedded within another NP or clause” (Hualde & Urbina,

2003:782), Basque speakers usually avoid this strategy and it can be heard in natural speech rarely.

a. Is the relative clause finite or non-finite?

The relative clause is finite.

b. What is the form of the relativized NP within the relative clause?

The form of the relativized NP within the relative clause is pronoun retention.

c. Is a subordinator used?

Yes, a complementizer *-(e)n* is attached to verbs.

d. What is the position of the relative clause with respect to the head?

The position of the relative clause is prenominal.

e. Functions the head noun have within the relative clause (with examples):

Function – oblique

(15)

[Hareki-n gustora ego-te-a lortze-n duda-n] lehengo neska d-a.

Her-COM well be-NMZ-DEF succeed-IMPERF TAM.be.3SG-COMP first girl TAM-be-3SG

'She is the first girl with whom I succeed in feeling good.'

(Hualde & Urbina, 2003:783)

References

- Hualde, José Ignacio & Jon Ortiz de Urbina. 2003. *A Grammar of Basque*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 764, 765, 776, 777, 778, 780, 782, 783, 791, 792, 793.
- Shopen, Timothy. 1985. *Language Typology and Syntactic Description: Volume 2, Complex Constructions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 145