

Metathetic processes

Arregi and Nevins (2012) claim that there are two types of metathetic processes at work in Basque auxiliaries.

Previous analyses

A&N trace variation between doubling (1) and replacement (2) in DD to the difference between these processes.¹

- (1) *g- ai -zki -gu -∅*
1PL.DAT AUX PL 1PL.DAT 3SG.ERG
'S/he has (verb-ed) it to us.' Biriattou (Lap)
- (2) *g- a -it- u -∅*
1PL.DAT T PL AUX 2SG.ERG
'S/he has (verb-ed) it to us.' Arcangues (Lap)

A&N derive the strong prediction from this claim. Doubling, which is generated by a post-syntactic process, cannot interfere with the agreement probe in T. For them, this probe is responsible for allomorphy of AUX and the existence of pluralizers.

Contradictory data

A robust generalization emerges from the Labourdin doubling dialects: most dialects do not trigger a plural allomorph of AUX for doubled 2PL datives (as A&N predict); however, some do.

Forms of *nor-nori-nork* AUX with PL DO, 2PL IO. The singular form is *au*, as seen in for example *nauzki* with PL DO + 1sc IO.²

Place	-au-	-ai-
Sare	✓	
Ahetze	✓	
St. Jean de Luz	✓ (1980's)	✓ (1860's)
Guéthary	✓	✓
Ascain	✓	
Biriattou		✓
Hendaye	✓	
Urrugne	✓	
Bassussary	✓	
Arbonne	✓	

My analysis

On my analysis, this variation is allomorphy of AUX conditioned by linear adjacency. Dialects can differ as to whether 2PL is on the list of allomorphy-triggering elements.

Dative Displacement

The prefix position of a Basque auxiliary verb is typically occupied by an absolutive agreement marker, as in (3). In non-present tense forms with a third person absolutive argument (which thus lack a ϕ prefix, according to Arregi and Nevins (2012) among others), a process called Ergative Displacement applies, causing the ergative ϕ -features to be realized in the prefix position, as in (4). Dative displacement (DD) is an innovation in Basque morphology whereby the dative argument of a ditransitive is marked prefixally (in ditransitives, the absolutive is always 3rd person, and thus does not occupy the prefix position), as in (5). The distribution of DD is shown in Figure 1.

Plural morphology: a proposal

Basque auxiliary verbs can contain the plural morphemes *it* and *zki*.³ These morphemes have often been analyzed as reflexes of agreement. I propose a different approach:

The pluralizer *it* is part of allomorphic realization of AUX conditioned by a ϕ -prefix; *zki* is a reflex of agreement.

- (3) *n- au -zu*
1SG.ABS AUX 2SG.ERG
'You have (verb-ed) me.'
- (4) *n- u -en*
1SG.ERG AUX C.PAST
'I had (verb-ed) it.'
- (5) *d- i -da -zu → n- au -zu*
PFX.DEF AUX 1SG.DAT 2SG.ERG 1SG.DAT AUX 2SG.ERG
'You (verb-ed) it to me' non-DD → DD version

This proposal accounts for several facts:

- The appearance of both *it* and *zki* in DD forms (top right)
- The appearance of *it* (but not *zki*) triggered by non-plural prefixes

This proposal also resolves a failed prediction of the account given by A&N of DD's interaction with their multi-layered morphological system.

Pluralizers and DD

Basque auxiliary verbs can contain the pluralizing morphemes *zki* and *it*. In Batua, *zki* is used in ditransitives and *it* in monotransitives. However, there is rich variation in ditransitives, as shown in Figure 2. Monotransitives show a small amount of variation.⁴

Previous Analyses

Preminger (2009) and Arregi and Nevins (2012) both argue that *it* is a reflex of [+plural] Agree between T and the absolutive argument.

Data from DD dialects suggest that this analysis misses a generalization. In the dialect of Irun, *it* is the pluralizer in every cell of every paradigm, **except** when DD applies to a 1sc dative, in which case *zki* is used:⁵

- (6) *d- it- i -da -zu*
PFX.DEF PL AUX 1SG.DAT 2SG.ERG
> *tirazu* 'You have (verb-ed) them to me.' Irun (NHN)

- (7) *n- a -zki -zu*
1SG.DAT AUX PL 2SG.ERG
'You have (verb-ed) them to me.' Irun with DD

There are also dialects in which both *it* and *zki* can surface on DD forms:

- (8) *g- ait- u -zki -zu*
1PL.DAT PL.DAT AUX PL.ABS 2SG.ERG
'You have (verb-ed) them to us.' Ahetze (Lap)

My analysis

The above data from DD forms show that *it* is always associated with the prefix, whereas *zki* is always associated with the absolutive. Thus, *it* is adjacency-triggered allomorphy of the auxiliary stem, whereas *zki* is a reflex of Agree.⁶

Non-plural pluralizers

In Basque, the neutral-politeness 2SG pronoun *zu* is treated as plural by verbal agreement, for historical reasons. The familiar 2SG pronoun *hi*, however, never is. Nonetheless, in some dialects it triggers *it* (but not the [+part +pl] intransitive AUX root *-ara*):

- (9) *h- it- u -gu*
2SG.FAM PL AUX 1PL.ERG
'We have (verb-ed) you.' Mendionde (WLN)

Figures

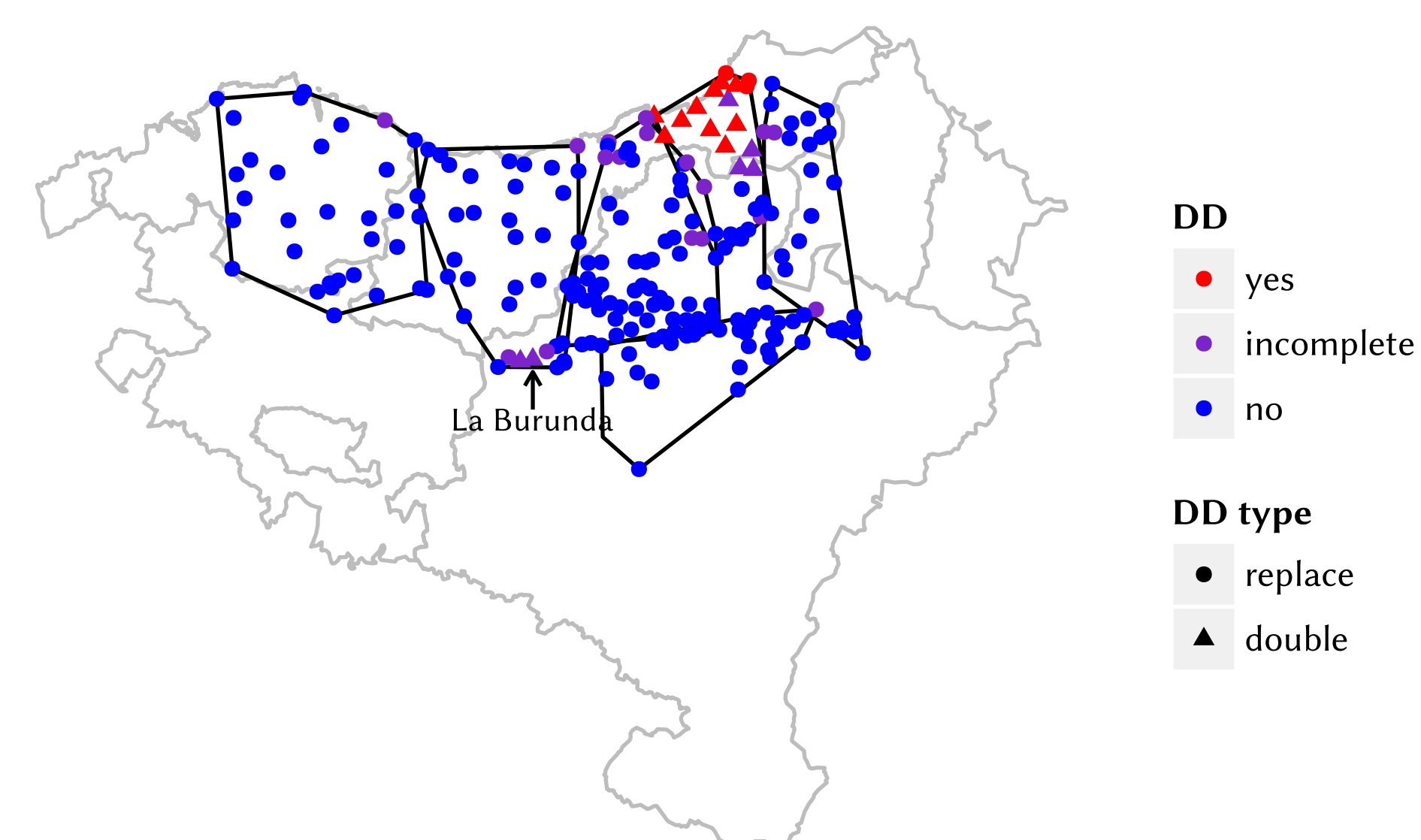


Fig. 1: A map of the distribution of Dative Displacement. Grey lines indicate traditional province boundaries. Black lines delineate dialect areas from the MVAV (originally based on Bonaparte's classification). Does not include data from Western Low Navarre or Zuberoa.

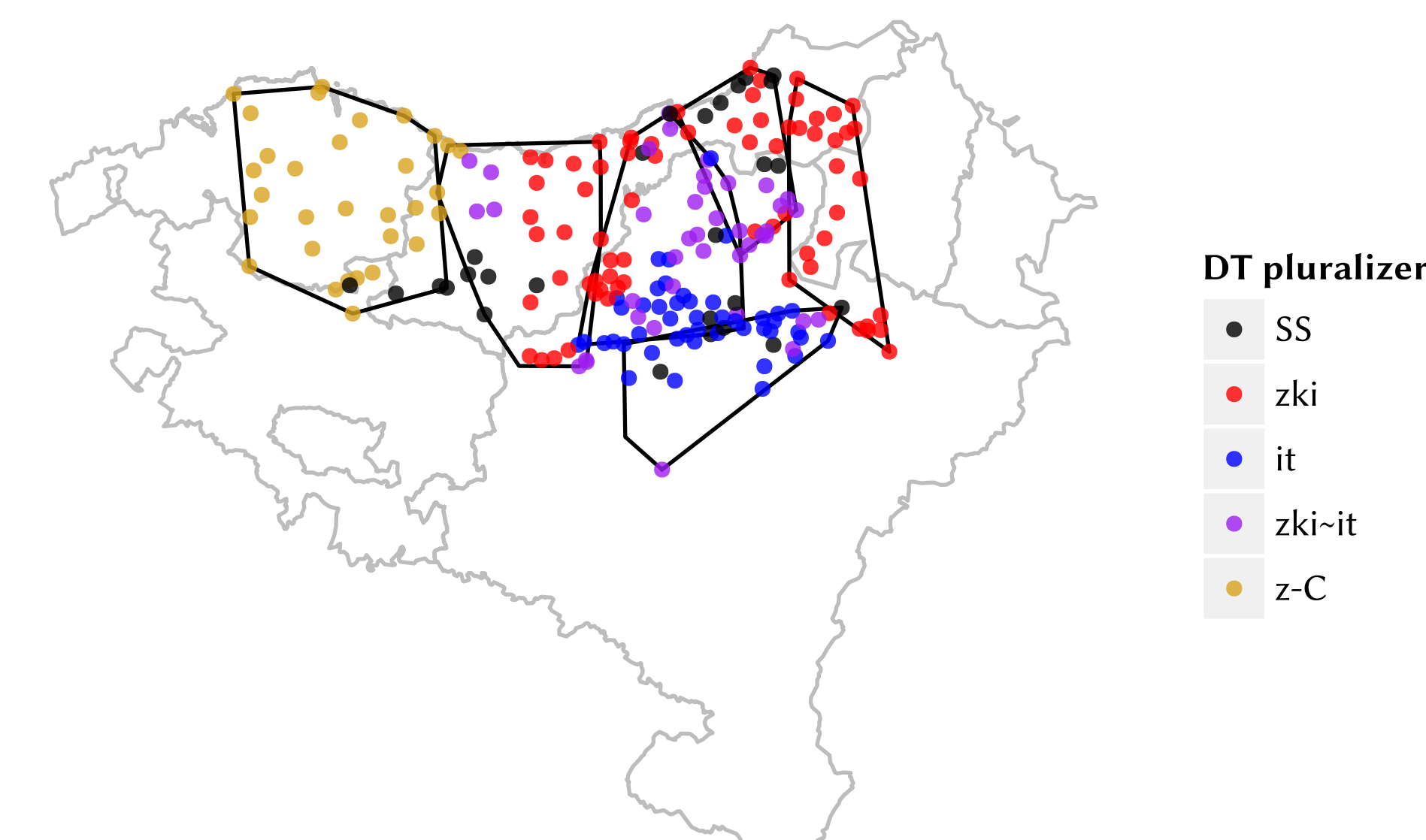


Fig. 2: A map of the distribution of pluralizers in the ditransitive auxiliary paradigm. z-C indicates plural complementizer agreement; SS indicates syncretism with singular (no pluralizer appears)