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## Markedness Disharmony in Basque

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The paper is devoted to several cases of markedness disharmony in Basque. This notion is used to refer to the cases in which some criteria of markedness contradict other ones, cf. the notion of markedness harmony (“if something is marked in way A, then it is also marked in way B”) in (Zeevat s.a.: 1), and is close to the notion of markedness reversal that is «“marked” behaviour of categories that are usually unmarked» under certain circumstances; these cases are explained by frequency (Haspelmath 2006). In this paper, I investigate the cases in which formal markedness (zero coding vs. explicit coding) contradicts statistical markedness, the formally more marked form being more frequent.

The first type of markedness disharmony is due to phonological change. Zero marking of plural vs. explicit marking of singular in the genitive and some other cases derived from the genitive, cf. *lagun-a-ren* friend-SG-GEN ‘friend’s’ vs. *lagun-Ø-en* friend-PL-GEN ‘friends’, can be explained as a result of vowel contraction. Another case of markedness disharmony is the second person singular present tense form (*Ø-haiz* /ais/ 2SG-AUX.PRS ‘(thou) art’, where the zero marker of the second person is opposed to the explicit marker of the first person, cf. *n-aiz* 1SG-AUX.PRS ‘I am’) is due to the dropping of the first consonant. Markedness disharmony due to historical reasons can be observed in Russian (the zero genitive plural for some declension classes); in English (the third singular present marker -s vs. the zero marker of the other persons and numbers); in Old French (the oblique case plural); in Spanish (the zero marker of the first person singular imperfective); and in Georgian (the zero second person singular subject marker). Interestingly enough, in all the cases of this type, the zero marker is never the only allomorph of its morpheme.

The second type of markedness disharmony is linked to cases where phonological reduction seems never to have taken place, and zero morphemes have emerged in another way, cf. (Bybee 1994: 240). One such case is the statistically unmarked (the most frequent) non-finite verbal form, which is the perfect participle, cf. *sar-tu* enter-PFV ‘entered’ vs. the radical form *sar-Ø* enter-RAD ‘enter’. As both the participle and the radical are most often used as a constituent

of a finite verb, for the indicative (more frequent) and for the subjunctive (less frequent) mood correspondingly, in this case, markedness disharmony could be explained by the slightly reformulated principle of markedness complementarity, introduced by Shapiro, stating that “oppositely marked stems and desinences attract, identically marked stems and desinences repel” (Shapiro 1983: 146).

Another case of markedness disharmony of the second type is the formally marked definite singular form of noun phrases (*mendi-a* mountain-DEF.SG ‘a/the mountain’) vs. the unmarked indefinite form (*mendi-∅* mountain-INDF ‘(a) mountain’), which is extremely limited both in terms of frequency and context. This contrast is not typical for all cases: in locative cases the least marked form is the definite singular, cf. *mendi-ta-ra* mountain-INDF-ALL ‘to a mountain’ vs. *mendi-∅-ra* mountain-DEF.SG-ALL ‘to a/the mountain’. Actually, in this case, formally marked and unmarked forms do not represent a well-formed morphological opposition, as two grammatical categories (definiteness and number) are involved in it.

**References:** • Bybee, J. (1994): The Grammaticization of Zero. Asymmetries in Tense and Aspect Systems. In: *Perspectives on Grammaticalization*, W. Pagliuca (ed.). John Benjamins, 235–254. • Haspelmath, M. (2006): Against Markedness (and what to replace it with). In: *Journal of Linguistics* 42(1), 25–70. • Shapiro, M. (1983): *The Sense of Grammar. Language as Semeiotic*. Indiana University Press. • Zeevat, Henk. (s.a.): *Markednesses* ([https://www.uva.nl/binaries/content/documents/personalpage\\_s/z/e/h.w.zeevat/en/tab-one/tab-one/cpitem%5B40%5D/asset?1355372856802](https://www.uva.nl/binaries/content/documents/personalpage_s/z/e/h.w.zeevat/en/tab-one/tab-one/cpitem%5B40%5D/asset?1355372856802)).