

Collocations in Basque: a test for classification¹

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Abstract

This work presents an initial attempt to classify collocations in Basque, since there are at present no dictionaries of collocations or word combinations in this language. We take as our reference point the taxonomy of Spanish by G. Corpas (1996), making allowances for the distinctive features of Basque morphosyntactic structures and current usage. We classify the collocations by their morphosyntactic structure and specify the base in each case, all with examples of common productions taken from the media and from spoken language. We also establish the principal lexical functions that appear in the examples.

Keywords

Lexicology, Phraseology, Collocations, Word combinations, Basque

1 Introduction

Our objective in this paper is to suggest a classification of Basque collocations by their base and morphosyntactic structure. For this purpose, we have collected and examined a number of common examples from the media and spoken language. There is no unitary definition of collocation, but two main approaches can be distinguished: one views collocation on the basis of the frequency with which two lexical units co-occur; the second views collocations as being the result of giving lexical form to a number of semantic relations that can be formally described (Bosque (dir.) 2004:CLIII). We take as our base the taxonomy of Spanish by G. Corpas (1996:66-76), although we feel allowances need to be made for the specifics of Basque grammatical categories. We seek to map the different types of Basque collocations in the grammar. In addition, many of the examples are classed into different lexical functions (Mel'čuk, 1998), although our main purpose is not to offer an exhaustive application of

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lexical functions. In fact, we believe that this approach may be useful for compiling general or specialised dictionaries and for teaching Basque as a second language. A taxonomy of Basque collocations would also be useful for the typology of languages. Following we provide a quick glance of Basque's typology and its social context as a background for the analysis this paper presents.

Basque is an agglutinative language; unlike prepositional languages such as Spanish, French or English, it operates with cases and postpositions attached to the noun. Examples of cases are absolutive, ergative and dative, thus: *etxe* 'house' + *a* (determiner of absolutive case): *etxea* ['house-abs]² 'the house'; *etxeak* or ergative case, [house-erg] 'the house'; *etxeari* or dative case [house-dat] 'to the house'. Examples of postpositions attached to the noun are, *inter alia*, allative, inesive, genitive-locative and instrumental, thus: *etxera* or allative [house-all] 'to the house'; *etxean* or inesive [house-in] 'in the house'; *etxeaz* or instrumental [house-ins] 'by (means of) the house'. Genitive-locative as in *etxeako*, [house-gen.loc] 'of the house, is a multifunctional postposition which can function as an adjective e.g. *erabateko akordio* 'total agreement' and as a nominalising suffix, e.g. *ezusteko galanta* [surprise great-abs] 'a great surprise'.

Basque is currently undergoing a process of unification, standardisation, and adaptation to new uses. However, the influence of Spanish and French, especially through calque, is having an almost decisive influence on this process of renovation (Alberdi et al., 2010). Indeed, over the last forty years a host of new collocations has entered the language of the Basque media (Altzibar, 2005:383-395). This paper is an attempt at a classification of collocations in Basque, a field that is arousing increasing interest and inspiring ever more research in Basque, such as the current work on phraseology by members of the lexicographically-oriented Elhuyar Fundazioa. Although Basque dictionaries and corpuses provide much information, there are still no dictionaries of collocations, and we have therefore had to identify many of them through observation and intuition. The examples—we have chosen only a few and left out the many dialectal and other variations—are taken from the daily newspaper *Berria* and from some dictionaries and compilations of popular lexicon.

We shall classify the collocations into three classes, based on their morphosyntactic structure: noun-based, adjective-based, and adverb-based.

2 Noun-based collocations

Basque noun phrases may be of three subclasses: when they function as the subject of a transitive verb they take the ergative case (*-k* added directly to the word or to the end of the determiner); for the indirect object the phrase takes the dative case (*-(r)i* added to the word). The absence of any addition, with the word appearing unadorned or with the determiner (*-a* sing., *-ak* plur.) alone, indicates the absolutive case. This is the most difficult situation, since the absolutive operates as an object with transitive verbs, but as a subject with intransitive verbs. This poses a problem for our classification because, except for clear examples, an

² Literal representations of the Basque examples are provided between brackets. A hyphen separates case suffixes and postpositions from the stem; a dot separates compounded stems and/or derivational suffixes. Abbreviations used are as follows: abs: absolutive; abl: ablative; all: allative; dat: dative; det: determiner; erg: ergative; gen: genitive; ins: instrumental; LF: lexical function; loc: locative; sin: singular; pl: plural; aux: auxiliary; tran: transitive; intr: intransitive.

object might function as a subject if used in an impersonal sentence (e.g. *zurrumurrua zabaldu da* [rumour-abs spread has] ‘The rumour (has) spread’ vs. *Irratiak zurrumurrua zabaldu du* [radio-erg rumour-abs spread has] ‘The radio (has) spread the rumour’: the absolutive *zurrumurrua* functions as an object in the latter example, and as a subject in the former). The absolutive case is therefore in itself functionally ambiguous. We shall begin our description by presenting the unambiguous cases: the ergative (always subject) and the dative (always indirect object except for defective verbs).

2.1 Noun (ERG) + verb

The subject receives the *-k* marker of the ergative or active subject:

etsiak hartu [hopelessness-erg take] ‘to be overcome by hopelessness’; (*mendia*) *suak hartu* ‘[(mountain-abs) fire-erg take] ‘the fire catch(es) (the hill)’; *loak hartu* [sleep-erg take(s)] ‘to fall asleep’; *goseak hil* (in examples such as *goseak hiltzen nago*, *I’m dying of hunger*’ fig.) [hunger-erg kill] ‘the hunger kill(s)’; *janariak/edariak on egin* [food/drink-erg well done] ‘the food/drink do(es) good.’

The examples above are of the value Oper ‘(to) do, carry out’. Non-ergative versions of some of those collocations can be found, as in *etsia hartu*, *su(a) hartu*, *lo(a) hartu* and *gosea hil*.

2.2 Noun (DAT) + verb

Collocations with the noun in the dative case, *-(r)i*. Here only examples where the dative is required by the verb are presented, without necessarily implying an indirect object function.

temari eutsi [obstinacy-dat hold] ‘to insist on (sth.)’; lexical solidarity exists between the two words (LF=ContOper); *lanari ekin* [work-dat insist] ‘to apply (oneself) to work’ (LF=IncepReal₁); *ihesari eman* [escape-dat give] ‘to escape/flee’ (LF=IncepOper).

2.3 Noun (absolutive case = subject/object) + verb

Contextual information is normally crucial in determining the function (subject or object of the absolutive noun), i.e. in few cases is the perceived function “context-free”, and these are mostly instances when the absolutive functions as an object.

2.3.1 Noun (absolutive = object) + verb

This is a very frequent subtype and includes collocations with a wide range of combining possibilities: e.g. in some units the collocate (verb) can be used with different noun bases from the same semantic field, as in *eztabaida/auzia erabaki* [argument/dispute-abs resolve] ‘to resolve an argument/dispute’. Other examples:

garaipena lortu [victory-abs achieve] ‘to achieve the victory’; *gatazka konpondu/gainditu* [conflict-abs repair/overcome] ‘to resolve the conflict’; *kargua izan/bete/utzi* [post-abs have/fulfil/leave] ‘to hold/fulfil/leave the position (of responsibility)’; *kontrola eduki/galdu* [control-abs have/lose] ‘to hold/lose control.’

The lexical functions of the examples above are Oper₁ (*garaipena lortu*, *kontrola eduki*), and Real₁ (*gatazka konpondu/gainditu*, *kargua bete*).

Within the noun (abs=object) + verb type, probably the most numerous collocations are those in which the verb is delexicalized and its meaning nearly grammaticalized, with the noun providing the semantic content. These are polysemic verbs: *eman* ‘give’, *hartu* ‘take’, *ipini/jarri* ‘put/place’, *ekarri* ‘bring’...

hasiera/amaiera eman [start/end-abs give] ‘to commence’; *erabakia hartu* [decision-abs take] ‘to make a decision’; *mozorroa ipini* [disguise-abs put/place] ‘put on a disguise.’

The examples above bear the lexical functions Oper₁ (*erabakia hartu*), CausFact₀ (*hasiera/amaiera eman*), Real₁ ‘real’ (*mozorroa ipini*).

This class contains a large subtype, which includes the collocations formed with almost completely delexicalized verbs: *egin* ‘to do’, *izan* ‘to be’, *ukan* or *eduki* ‘to have/possess’, *hartu* ‘take’, as in:

lotsa izan [shame-abs have] ‘to feel ashamed’; *parte hartu* [part-abs take] ‘to take part’; *arrakasta izan/ukan/eduki* [success-abs-sin have] ‘to be successful’; *hitz egin* [word-abs make] ‘to speak.’

These examples are of the value Oper₁. The most singular verb collocate in Basque is *egin* ‘to make/do’: in Basque common actions such as *sleep*, *work* and *work* are not expressed by means of single-word verbs, but by noun + verb pairs: *hitz* ‘word’, *lo* ‘sleep’, *lan* ‘work’ + verb *egin* ‘make’. This is a very productive device in Basque, and is used to form many verbs (see Basque constructions with support or light verb in Alonso Ramos 2001:88-93; Abaitua 1988).

2.3.2 Noun (ABS=subject/object) + verb

Here we present some examples in which the function of the absolutive may vary depending on whether the verb is intransitive (impersonal sentences) or transitive. In the latter case the absolutive will clearly be the object of the verb:

gerra piztu (da) [war-abs lit (aux-intransitive)] ‘the war (is) started’ (there is an underlying metaphor: “war is fire”); compare with *gerra piztu (du)* [war-abs lit (aux-transitive)] ‘(somebody) has started the war’; *susmoa egiaztatu (da)* [suspicion-abs confirm (aux-intransitive)] ‘the suspicion (is) confirmed’; compare with *susmoa egiaztatu (du)* [suspicion-abs confirm (aux-transitive)] ‘(somebody) (has) confirmed the suspicion’; *zurrumurrua zabaldu (da)* [rumor-abs spread (aux-intransitive)] ‘the rumour (is) spread’; compare with

zurrumurrua zabaldu (du) [rumor-abs spread (aux-transitive)] ‘(somebody) has spread the rumour.’

These examples bear the lexical functions Func₀ ‘to function’, e.g. *zurrumurrua zabaldu (da)*, CausFunc, e.g. *zurrumurrua zabaldu (du)*, *gerra piztu (du)*, IncepFunc, e.g. *gerra piztu (da)*, and Fact ‘fact’ (e.g. *susmoa egiaztatu*).

2.4 Noun + adjective

In many collocations, the collocate (adjective) intensifies its base (noun). The lexical function Magn ‘very’, ‘to a (very) high degree’, ‘intense(ly)’, ‘completely’ is one of the most frequent, e.g. *adiskide/lagun zahar* [friend/companion old] ‘old friend’. The collocate *min* ‘sharp, intense’, is combined with various nouns:

adiskide min [friend intense] ‘close friend; *etsai min* [enemy intense] ‘bitter enemy’; *dolu min* [pain sharp] ‘deep pain’ (lexicalised in *dolumin* ‘condolence’); *uda min* [summer intense] ‘the height of summer’; *negu min* [winter intense] ‘the critical period of winter.’

Other adjectives (*hotz*, *huts*) collocate with specific nouns. With *hotz* ‘cold; simple, mere, pure’:

haur hotz [child mere] ‘a mere child’; *hil hotz* [dead cold] ‘dead body’; in Basque, this pair has been lexicalized as ‘corpse’; *pobre hotz* [poor mere] ‘utterly poor’; *alfer hotz* [lazy pure] ‘utterly lazy’ (these last two examples can also be considered as instances of ‘adjective + adjective’ collocations; see. 3.1).

Similar to *hotz* but semantically broader is *huts* ‘mere, pure, simple; alone’:

logika hutsa [logic alone] ‘pure logic’; *haur huts* [child mere] ‘a mere child’; *ganorabako huts* [foundation.without pure] ‘utterly irresponsible (person).’

Some very common values of the lexical function Magn are interchangeable when they accompany some nouns: *bizi* ‘living, lively’, *larri* ‘serious, acute’, *gorri* ‘red, raw’, *gogor* ‘hard’, *amorratu* ‘furious’, *porrokatu* ‘waste’, etc.:

istilu larri/gorri/gogor [conflict acute/raw/strong] ‘serious conflict’; *haserre/eskandalu bizi/gorri* [indignation/scandal live/raw] ‘live indignation/scandal.’

But the very same adjectives are not interchangeable with other nouns:

borroka bizi [fight live] ‘violent fight’; *gogo bizi* [desire live] ‘living desire’, whilst there is no **gogo gorri* [desire raw] ‘strong desire’, or **gogo larri* [desire acute] ‘pressing desire’, or **gogo gogor* [desire hard] ‘strong desire.’

Collocations with polysemous colour epithets (*gorri* ‘red’, *beltz* ‘black’, *zuri* ‘white’) are abundant in Basque. Those with lexical function Magn include:

miseria gorri [misery red] ‘extreme misery’; *behar/premia gorri* [need red] ‘pressing need’; *istilu gorri* [conflict red] ‘grave conflict’; *eskandalu gorri* [scandal red] ‘grave scandal’; *miseria gorri* [misery red] ‘extreme destitution’; *ele zuri* [word white] ‘false word.’

Also abundant are collocations of lexical function Epit ‘redundant cliché’, i.e. of a semantically empty epithet:

ezpain gorri [lip red] ‘lip’; *urre gorri* [gold red] ‘gold’; *zilar zuri* [silver white] ‘silver’; *gau beltz* [night black] ‘dark night’; *itsaso zabal* [sea wide] ‘vast/immense ocean/sea’; *mundu zabal* [world wide] ‘wide world.’

Collocations of lexical function Ver ‘real’, ‘genuine’, ‘as it should be’: *labana zorrotz* [knife sharp] ‘sharp knife.’

In some examples of this LF the same collocate (adjective) is shared by various (base) nouns from the same semantic domain:

bista/begi/belarri zorrotz [sight/eye/ear sharp] ‘sharp sight/eye/hearing’; *ahots/begi/belarri zoli* [voice/eye/ear fine] ‘fine voice/eye/hearing.’

Many of the collocations of lexical function Ver are exemplary or ideal-confirming:

euskaldun garbi [Basque clean] ‘pure Basque’; *euskaldun peto-peto* [Basque fully] ‘thorough Basque’; *euskaldun jator* [Basque authentic] ‘authentic Basque.’

Some fixed descriptions can be classed within the lexical function Bon ‘good’. Traditional examples include:

Jainko on [God good] ‘the good God’; *Jainko txar* [God bad] ‘the bad God’ does not exist; *patxada on/eder* [calm good/plentiful] ‘good/great parsimony’; *sasoi on/eder* [age/season optimal] ‘optimal time (esp. about physical condition), time of youth.’

Others have a collocate with a negative significance (LF AntiBon):

de(a)bru (t)zar [devil bad] ‘the bad devil’; *jenio txar/gaizto* [temper bad/evil] ‘bad temper’; *susmo txar* [suspicion bad] ‘bad suspicion.’

There are abundant collocations of two opposite variants (positive/negative, good/bad, correct/incorrect, right/wrong), of the value Pos ‘positive evaluation’ and AntiPos.

balantza positibo/negatibo [balance positive/negative] ‘positive/negative balance’; *egoera on/txar* [situation good/bad] ‘good/bad situation’; *ohitura on/gaizto* [habit bad] ‘bad habit’; *iritzi on/txar* [opinion good/bad] ‘good/bad opinion’; *borondate on/txar* [will bad/good] ‘good/bad will.’

2.5 <adjective suffix -ko> + noun

Most adjectives follow the noun in Basque, but adjectives formed by the derivational suffixes *-dun*, *-ko* usually precede the noun. There are a number of adjective + noun pairs where the *-ko* adjective acts as a collocate:

aldeko/kontrako *iritzi/boto* [favour.of/against.of opinion/vote]
'favourable/opposing opinion/vote'; *erabateko akordio* [total.of agreement]
'total agreement'; *erabateko lehentasun* [total.of priority] 'total priority.'

In these examples, the main lexical functions are Pos (*aldeko iritzi, boto*), AntiPos (*kontrako iritzi/boto*), and Magn (*erabateko akordio/lehentasun*).

Some of these *-ko* adjectives can be found functioning as nouns, and could therefore be classified under the noun + adjective class, as in:

ezezko borobil (eman/hartu) [negative.of round (give/receive)] '(to give/receive)
a round negative'; *ezusteko handia/galanta (izan)* [unexpected.of
big/monumental] 'great surprise (to be).'

2.6 Noun + noun

In these collocations, the word order in Basque is opposite to Spanish; in English both order types are acceptable: the Spanish <noun + *de* + noun> constructions (*casa de muñecas* 'dolls' house', *ciudad de alegría* 'city of joy') have their counterpart in the Basque <noun + noun> constructions, where the order of the nouns is the reverse of Spanish: *panpin etxea* (lit. doll house), *alaitasun herria* (lit. joy city) 'city of joy'. Both constructions are possible in English, as the examples show. This <noun + noun> construction gives rise to a number of collocations, which can be divided into two lexical functions (Sing and Mult):

Collocations bearing the lexical function Sing 'singular, unique':

baratxuri atal [garlic part] 'clove of garlic'; *azukre koskor* [sugar piece] 'sugar lump'; *txokolate tableta/pastilla* [chocolate tablet/bar] 'chocolate bar'; *xaboi pastilla* [soap bar] 'bar of soap.'

Collocations bearing the function Mult 'multitude':

arrain talde [fish group] 'school of fish'; *erle-mulko* [bee-bunch] 'swarm of bees'; *txori talde/aldra/saldo* [bird group/band/flock] 'flock of birds.'

3 Adjective-based collocations

3.1 Adjective + adjective

Some of these double-adjective collocations can function as nouns, as in the first example

below (*aberats okitu*). The examples we present here bear the lexical function Magn and they have as their collocates the adjectives *okitu* ‘fed up, full’, *erromes* ‘poor, pilgrim’, *hotz* ‘cold; simple, mere, pure’, *huts* ‘mere, pure, simple; alone’, *garbi* ‘pure, manifest’, *arrail* ‘long thick splinter; drunk’, *amorratu* ‘enraged’:

aberats okitu [rich full] ‘very rich, millionaire’; *zahar okitu* [old full] ‘very old’ (but not **pobre okitu* [poor full]); *pobre erromes* [poor poor/pilgrim] ‘very poor’; *pobre hotz* [poor pure] ‘utterly poor’; *alfer hotz* [lazy pure] ‘utterly lazy’; *lapur garbi* [thief pure] ‘very thieving’ (but not **aberats garbi* [rich pure]); *txarri zikin* [pig dirty] or *txerri urde* [pig filthy/hog] ‘filthy pig’; *asto ziri* [donkey stupid] ‘stupid donkey.’

The adjective *arrail* is more restrictive: it collocates only with *mozkor/hordi* ‘drunk’: *mozkor/hordi arrail/arraildu* [drunk split] ‘completely drunk.’

These units also have another construction and pronunciation (with a pause in the middle): *aberatsa, okitua* [rich-abs, full-abs] ‘very rich’; *zaharra, okitua* [old-abs, full-abs] ‘very old’; *pobrea, erromesa* [poor-abs, poor/pilgrim-abs] ‘very poor’; *alferra, hotza* [lazy-abs, pure-abs] ‘utterly lazy’; *lapurra, garbia!* [thief-abs, pure-abs] ‘very thieving’; *mozkorra, arraila* [drunk-abs, split-abs] ‘completely inebriated.’

3.2 Adverb of degree formed with Ø or -ki + participle / adjective

The base of these units is the adjective or the participle in adjectival function, and the adverb is a collocate: *erabat komentzituta/komentzitua* [utterly convinced], *larri(ki)/arin(ki) zaurituta/zauritua* [grave(ly)/slight(ly) wounded], *zabal idekia* [wide open] (these examples are related to the adverbial constructions in 4.1.1). Adverbial suffix -ki, used in northern dialects, is optional. In the oxymoron *Itsuski ederra* [horribly beautiful] ‘very beautiful’ there is lexical solidarity between the collocates. All these examples implement the lexical function Magn, except *arin(ki) zaurituta/zauritua*, which is AntiMagn.

4 Adverb (adverbial phrase) + Verb

We have divided these adverb-based collocations into four classes: a first one with adverbs that characterize the manner and place of the verb’s action; a second one with adverbs that indicate semantic and phonic proximity; a third one with onomatopoeia in adverbial function and a fourth where the adverb is a phrase based on a noun plus the inesive, allative or instrumental postpositions.

It is a matter of some controversy whether the adverb or the verb should be considered as the base of the collocation. In some examples, the verb seems to clearly merit being accepted as the base (e.g. *estu lotu* [tight tie] ‘to tie tightly’), but many other examples are much harder to decide upon, especially in the subtypes Adverb (semantic and phonic proximity) + Verb, Onomatopoeia (in adverbial function) + Verb, or Adverbial phrase + Verb, as exemplified below.

The most frequent adverb suffix is Ø; other adverbial suffixes are *-ki*, *-ka* (derivational suffixes of manner), and the postpositive suffixes *-n* (inesive), *-ra* (allative), *-z* (instrumental).

4.1 Adverb (manner / place) + Verb

4.1.1 Adverb (manner) + verb (these examples bear the function Magn, except arin(ki) zauritu, which bears LF AntiMagn):

argi (eta garbi) esan [clear (and clean) say] ‘to say clearly’; *arrote jantzi* [beggar dress] ‘to dress like a ragged person’; *estu lotu* [tightly tie] ‘to tie tightly’; *itsutuki maite* [blind.ly love] ‘to love blindly’; *tinko/irmo eutsi* [firmly/steadfastly maintain] ‘to maintain firmly’; *larri(ki)/arin(ki) zauritu* [grave(ly)/light(ly) injure] ‘to be seriously/slightly injured’; *zabal ireki* [wide open] ‘to open wide.’

Some of the adverbial collocates of manner have alternate antithetical adverbs (*ongi/gaizki* ‘well/badly’, *zuzen/oker* ‘correctly/incorrectly’, *alde/kontra* ‘in favour /against’); *ongi/gaizki erabili* [right/wrongly treat] ‘to treat well/badly’; *ongi/gaizki egin* [well/badly do] ‘to do/act well/badly’. Examples:

ongi/gaizki esan (norbaiti) [well/badly say (somebody-dat)] ‘to speak kindly/unkindly (to a person)’; *zuzen/oker jokatu* [right/wrongly act] ‘to act correctly/incorrectly, wrongly’; *alde/kontra izan/jarri/jokatu* [in favour/against be/place/act] ‘to be/place (oneself)/to act in favour / against.’

These examples bear the lexical functions Pos and AntiPos.

4.1.2 Adverb (place) + verb

There are also abundant examples of adverbial collocate + delexicalized verb (*egon* ‘to be’, *gelditu* ‘to stay’, *ibili* ‘to walk’ etc.):

kanpo(an)/barne(an) izan/egon [outside(-in)/inside(-in) be/stay] ‘to be outside/inside’ (LF Loc_{in}); *bazter(ean) gelditu/egon/utzi* [side(-in) remain/stay/leave] ‘to remain/be/leave aside’ (LF Loc_{in}); *aurrera egin* [forward-all do] ‘to go forward, advance’ (LF Loc_{ad}); *atzetik ibili* [back-abl move] ‘to go behind, follow’ (LF Loc_{ab}).

4.2 Adverb (semantic and phonic proximity) + Verb

Somewhere on the border between collocations and idioms are units with a double and (quasi)synonymic collocate. Some of these dual collocates also implement the lexical function Magn:

negar zotinka ari/egon [cry sobbing act/be] ‘to be sobbing’; *antsika eta negarrez ari/egon* [moaning and crying act/be] ‘to be moaning and crying’; *negar marrumaz ari /egon* [cry howling act/be] ‘to be sobbing and shouting.’

As the examples above show, in some of these expressions the two near-synonymic collocates are conjoined by the conjunction *eta* ‘and’ —a structure with an intensive reduplicative function:

korrika eta presaka (joan/ibili) [running and rushing (go/act)] ‘(go/act) in a hurry’; *estu eta larri (ibili)* [pressed and gravely (go/act)] ‘(to act/go) very hurriedly.’

Sometimes the semantic proximity mentioned above may be reinforced by some phonic devices, such as rhyming pairs:

sor eta gor egon/gelditu [perceptionless and deaf be/remain] ‘to be/remain completely deaf’, lexicalized in *sorgor* ‘deaf, insensitive’; *sor eta lor gelditu* [perceptionless and upset remain] ‘to become completely astonished’; *isil eta biribil egon* [quiet and round be] ‘to be/remain silent and fulfilled/entire.’

Among these, there are collocations formed by two adjectives with different linguistic origins (with an attributive or predicative adverbial function), one from Basque and another from Spanish, both of them bearing a close or similar meaning; the play between the languages lends expressivity, humour and colloquial connotations to these units, which are often used without a verb:

antzeko parezido (izan) [similar alike (be)] ‘(to be) similar’

Sometimes both words come from Spanish directly, keeping an assonance or loose rhyme between them, as in:

tentepotente (egon) [upright.strong (be)] ‘(to be) standing, still/stiff’; *serio demonio egon/ari* [serious devil be/act] ‘(to be/to act) seriously’; *kieto para(d)o (egon)* [still still (be)] ‘(to be) stock still.’

4.3 Onomatopoeia (in adverbial function) + verb

In Basque, collocations formed by onomatopoeias are frequent in both common and educated language.

dinbi-danba jo [<symbolic sound> hit] ‘to hit repeatedly, to fire a shot, to toll (a bell)’; *zanga-zanga edan* [<symbolic sound> drink] ‘to drink with large gulps or with great desire’; *tipi-tapa joan* [<symbolic sound> go] ‘to march/walk step by step’; *mauka-mauka jan* [<symbolic sound> eat] ‘eat voraciously’; *bala-bala/barra-barra zabaldu* [<symbolic sound> spread] ‘to spread’; *(elurra) mara-mara ari/egin/erori/bota* [(snow-abs) <symbolic sound> do/make/fall/throw] ‘to snow gently’; *(elurra) zarra-zarra ari* [(snow-abs) <symbolic sound> do] ‘to snow heavily’; *(euria) ziri-ziri/ziri-miri egin/ari/erori/bota* [(rain-abs) <symbolic sound> make/do/fall/throw] ‘to rain gently’ (from *ziri-miri* comes the word *sirimiri* also used in Spanish for ‘drizzle’), etc.

In some of these examples there is lexical solidarity between the collocates. These

onomatopoeia-based collocations bear the lexical function Son '(to) emit characteristic sound'.

4.4 Adverbial phrase (noun + *-n*, *-ra*, *-z*) + verb

In Basque collocations only three postpositions occur significantly: the allative (*-ra* 'to-where'), the inesive (*-n*, 'where/when'), and the instrumental (*-z*).

Examples with the inesive postposition:

martxan/abian jarri [move/start-in place] 'to give/take a start' (LF IncepOper₁);
auzi(t)an jarri/ipini [question-in put/place] 'to call (sth.) into question' (LF Labor);
zalantzan jarri/ipini [doubt-in put/place] 'to doubt (about sth.)' (LF Labor);
aurrean joan [front-in go] 'to go in front, lead' (LF Loc_{in}).

Examples with the allative:

auzitara eraman [court-all-s carry] 'to take (someone) to court' (LF Labor);
burura eraman [head-all carry] 'to carry out' (LF Oper); *atzera bota* [back-all throw] 'to throw back, reject' (LF Oper); *aurrera egin* [forward-all do] 'to go forward, advance' (LF Oper).

Examples with the instrumental:

abantailaz jokatu [advantage-ins play] 'to play with advantage' (LF Oper₁);
negarrez urtu [tear-ins/in melt] 'to melt in tears'; *ahalkez urtu* [shame-ins melt] 'to melt (oneself) with shame'; *urguluz hantu* [pride-ins swell] 'to swell with pride.'

The last three examples bear the lexical function Magn or Excess.

5 Conclusions

We have outlined a classification based on the morphosyntactic structure of the collocations. We have distinguished three types: noun-based, adjective-based, and adverb + verb. We find difficulty in specifying what the base is in many examples of the latter type (adverb + verb).

One noteworthy result of the description is that an important number of the morphosyntactic patterns of Basque collocations are different to the Romance languages of the region. The different patterns we have recognized are the following: noun (ergative) + verb (2.1); noun (dative) + verb (2.2); noun + *egin* verb (2.3.1); <adjective suffix -ko> + noun (2.5); units with a double and (quasi)synonymic collocate (4.2); and onomatopoeic constructions (4.3.).

From the examples shown we can deduce an abundance of the following constructions: noun (absolutive = object) + verb (2.3.1), <noun + adjective> (2.4.), onomatopoeic collocations (4.3) and adverbial phrase + verb (4.4).

The examples show a diversity of lexical functions (12 Simple Standard LF and 9 Complex Standard LF), being the most abundant Oper₁ and Magn.

The abundant examples we have analyzed indicate the combining possibilities and constraints of many common words, and present a broad panorama which we believe may be of use for Basque speakers and linguists.

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