

Chapter 6

Light Verb Constructions in Basque and Romance

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6.1. Introduction

6.1.1. What is a Light Verb Construction?

When Virginia Woolf writes in her diary *I took a walk by myself*, instead of *I walked by myself*, she is choosing to linguistically construe a particular conceptual scene by means of a L(ight) V(erb) C(onstruction). In these constructions the verb—*took*—bears little semantic weight, this being encoded in a N(on-)V(erb) E(lement)—*a walk*. LVCs, such as *take a walk*, *have a bath*, or *give a cuddle*, are certainly not a quirk of English. In fact, as research over the last 25 years has shown, they are abundant crosslinguistically and in some languages like Basque they are actually the unmarked way to encode certain types of events.¹

While the format of LVCs varies both intra- and cross-linguistically, it displays certain constant features. As their name suggests, LVCs are headed by a verb that, at least within the construction, has a very abstract semantic content. In fact, the semantic contribution of the L(ight) V(erb) seems to be limited to functional notions related to argument and event structure. On the other hand, the NVE, whose lexical category may change across LVCs and also depending on the language, largely encapsulates the conceptual content of the construction, that is, the particular event evoked.² To show how this is actually the division of labour between the LV and the NVE, it is useful to compare, on the one hand, two constructions sharing the same LV but differing in their NVE and, on the other, two constructions sharing the same NVE but being different with respect to their LV. We can illustrate the former case with the minimal pair involving the Spanish LVCs *dar miedo* ‘give fear’ ‘frighten’ and *dar vergüenza* ‘give embarrassment’ ‘embarrass’. These LVCs share the same LV, *dar* ‘give’, and the abstract semantics of transferal inherent to this verb is preserved in these constructions.

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¹ See Butt (2010) for an overview, and for useful terminological precisions, notably the distinction between *LVC* and *complex predicate*. See also Bowern (2008). On the other hand, as pointed out by Lin (2001:22), the use of *light verb* as related to LVCs is not exactly equivalent to what is known as *Chomskyan light verb* (Chomsky 1995), that is, a functional verb that takes the VP as complement and that is responsible for the projection of the external argument and for the assignment of case to the object (see Larson 1988 and Hale & Keyser 1993 for seminal proposals).

² Although we use *NVE* throughout this work, since it constitutes a good label considering the kind of LVCs that we encounter in Basque and Romance, it should be noted that in other languages like Urdu the element containing the conceptual portion of the LVC can be of *verbal* category (see Butt 1995, 2010).

Thus, both LVCs are construed with a dative understood as the experiencer of the emotion:³

- (1) a. A Marisa le dan miedo las películas de terror.
 DAT Marisa DAT.3SG give.3PL fear the.PL films.PL of horror
 ‘Horror films frighten Marisa.’
 b. A Marisa le da vergüenza hablar en público.
 DAT Marisa DAT.3SG give.3SG embarrassment talk.INF in public
 ‘Marisa feels embarrassed to talk in public.’

The difference between the two LVCs is exclusively of conceptual nature, and corresponds to the difference between the emotions of fear and embarrassment, as encoded in their NVEs. On the other hand, to exemplify the case of two LVCs differing in their LV but not in their NVE we may keep *dar miedo* and compare it with *pasar miedo* ‘pass fear’ ‘be afraid’:⁴

- (2) a. A Marisa le dan miedo las películas de terror.
 DAT Marisa DAT.3SG give.3PL fear the.PL films.PL of horror
 ‘Horror films frighten Marisa.’
 b. Marisa pasa miedo con las películas de terror.
 Marisa pass.3PL fear with the.PL films.PL of horror
 ‘Marisa feels fear with horror films.’

In this case the same emotion (fear) is involved, but the argument-structure properties are different. Thus, *pasar miedo* requires a subject experiencer and the stimulus can be expressed as a PP headed by *con* ‘with’, while *dar miedo* appears with a subject stimulus and a dative experiencer. This difference, as is evident, can only depend on the choice of LV. Interestingly, however, this choice is not completely free: research has shown that the semantic properties of the NVE may determine, at least to some extent, which LV it combines with (Alba-Salas 2002: 51, and references cited therein). At the extreme of semantic cohesion between the LV and the NVE lie, of course, the many LVCs with idiomatic meaning, that is, a meaning that cannot be computed straightforwardly from the sum of the meanings of the LV and the NVE, as that shown by the Basque LVCs *iskin egin* ‘corner do’ ‘elude’ or *hanka egin* ‘leg do’ ‘escape rapidly’.

A prominent fact about LVCs is that they tend to correlate with a verb that expresses more or less the same meaning, as was shown above with the pair *take a walk* and *walk*, and can be further illustrated with the pair *dar vergüenza* ‘give embarrassment’ and *avergonzar* ‘embarrass’ in Spanish. It is important to emphasize that the semantic equivalence between these pairs is not complete, as seminally pointed out by Wierzbicka (1982). In any case, LVCs do not always count with synthetic counterparts. In fact, in languages like Basque most of them do not (Martinez 2015: 30, Aldai 2009: 823). The generality of the analytic, LVC-based expression of a large set of events in

³ The abbreviations used in glosses are the following ones: ABS ‘absolute’, ADV ‘adverbial suffix’, AUX ‘auxiliary’, COMPL ‘complementizer’, DAT ‘dative’, DET ‘determiner’, ERG ‘ergative’, INES ‘inessive’, INF ‘infinitive’, INSTR ‘instrumental’, LOC ‘locative’, PL ‘plural’, PRS ‘present’, PST ‘past’, PTVE ‘partitive’, SG ‘singular’. Also, note that although we generally provide a full-fledged gloss for Basque auxiliaries, in some instances we will just gloss AUX for reasons of space.

⁴ See, however, section 2.1, where we provide an account of several pairs of synonymous LVCs sharing a NVE and differing in their LVs.

Basque is, as we will see, one of the major differences when we compare this language with modern Romance.

6.1.2 A brief state of the art

LVCs have come to occupy an important place in the agenda of linguistic descriptions and syntactic theory ever since Jespersen (1954) coined the term *light verb*.⁵ This label was taken quite literally in the first papers dedicated specifically to LVCs. Indeed, with some exceptions such as Wierzbicka's (1982), who studies the semantic contribution of *have* in constructions such as *have a bath*, a leading idea in the 70's and 80's was that the LV is completely devoid of predication force and only contributes verbihood, and that the argument-structure properties of the LVC are inherited from the NVE through some mechanism. For instance, in an influential paper on Japanese constructions based on the LV *suru* 'do', Grimshaw & Mester (1988) propose that the LV does not have an argument structure of its own, and that it's the nominal NVE that transfers some or all of its arguments to the LVC. In a similar vein, Cattell (1984) argues that English LVs are predicationally vacuous. In turn, the lightness of LVs have made some authors propose that they are the historic result of a process of semantic bleaching of fully predication verbs, and consequently, that they can be further grammaticalized into auxiliary verbs and, finally, into inflectional markers (Hook 1991, Hopper and Traugott 1993, 2003).

A different analysis is provided by Kearns (1988) within a lexicalist framework distinguishing between Lexical Conceptual Structure and Syntactic Argument Structure (Hale & Keyser 1986, Rappaport & Levin 1988, among others). An LV like *give* provides a Syntactic Argument Structure, with a particular number of argument slots in a particular configuration, and also an event argument, but since the verb is delinked from its Lexical Conceptual Structure, no theta roles are available. Complementarily, the NVE is associated with a Lexical Conceptual Structure and a thematic array, but it lacks a full Syntactic Argument Structure. In the LVC these two defective components converge to contribute their lexical properties, yielding a full predicate.⁶ In any case, Kearns's (1988) work is best known for its contribution to differentiating between T(rue) LVs like those in *Take a walk*, *Give a groan* or *Have a bite*, and what she calls Vague Action Verbs, like those heading constructions such as *Make an inspection*, *Give a demonstration* or *Do the ironing*. The basic difference is that True Light Verbs combine with NVEs that are not argumental, since they do not pattern with arguments: they cannot become passive subjects, they cannot be extracted, they cannot be pronominalized, and they cannot be definite. By contrast, Vague Action Verbs combine with full-fledged argumental DPs. However, as we will see below, the range of variation within Basque LVCs (see section 2.2.) casts some doubts on Kearns' distinction between the two types of verbs found in LVCs.

More recently, some of the abovementioned ideas have been to a large extent disputed. First, the predication lightness or emptiness of the LV has been qualified,

⁵ In this short introduction we cannot do justice to the vast literature on LVCs, which encompasses a considerable number of languages—Asian ones featuring very prominently. Works providing general remarks on LVCs, or comparing different languages include Butt & Geuder (2001), Butt (2003, 2010), Bowerman (2008), Butt & Lahiri (2013) and Ramchand (2014). For particular languages, see, among others, Jespersen (1954), Jackendoff (1974), Wierzbicka (1982), Cattell (1984) and Kearns (1988), on English; Grimshaw & Mester (1988), on Japanese; Ahn (1991), on Korean; Mohanan (1994), on Hindi; Butt (1995), on Urdu; and Lin (2001), on Chinese. For references on LVCs in Basque and Romance (particularly on French and Spanish) see the following sections.

⁶ See Jackendoff (1974) for a pioneering analysis along similar lines.

and standard analyses take the LV to be a predicate and to contribute to a joint predication with the NVE through some mechanism. For example, in Butt's (1995) Lexical-Functional-Grammar approach, an operation called Argument Fusion combines the LV predicate (for instance, of "give" or "let" semantics) and the NVE predicate to yield a single predicate. The new predication unit hosts, on the one hand, argument slots directly contributed by either of the two basic predicates (e.g., an Agent from the LV, and a Theme from the NVE) and, on the other, argument slots that are the result of the fusion of two arguments slots of the basic predicates (for instance, a Causee that subsumes a Goal of the LV and an Agent of the NVE). Even more recently, Ramchand (2014) has taken a step further in this direction. In her analysis, LVs possess argument and event structures, which are, moreover, identical to those of their non-LV counterparts. Thus the LV *give* of LVCs like *John gave Mary a cuddle* is an item that lexicalizes an event structure containing the three subeventive heads proposed in Ramchand (2008)—Init(iation), Proc(ess) and Res(ult)—plus a Poss(essive) head merged under Res and projecting a phrase whose specifier is the recipient (*Mary*) and whose complement is the NVE (*a cuddle*). This structure provides the skeletal meaning of caused possession and is actually the very same one proposed for the non-light use of *give* (see Ramchand 2008: 103 for details). The difference between light and non-light *give* boils down to the nature of the complement: if the complement involves a bare event noun like *cuddle*, the interpretation of the construction is that of an LVC. We witness a type of approach, therefore, in which the emphasis is put on the similarities, rather than the differences, between the light and the non-light versions of the same verb.⁷

Ramchand's (2014) work on LVs in English, Bengali, and Persian actually aims at further exploring and validating an empirical claim made by Butt (2003) and Butt & Lahiri (2013) on the basis of diachronic evidence from Indo-Aryan languages. Ramchand (2014: 217) dubs this claim *Butt's Generalization*: "Unlike auxiliaries, which may become grammaticalized over time to have a purely functional use, light verbs always have a diachronically stable corresponding full or "heavy" version in all the languages in which they are found." From the strictly diachronic point of view, Butt & Lahiri (2013:7) state that they "depart from the received view that the existence of a light verb is due to a historical process of semantic bleaching" (see also Bower 2008). Their results—and those of Butt & Geuder's (2001) and Ramchand's (2014)—thus cast doubt on the position, represented by Hook (1991) and Hopper & Traugott's (1993, 2003), that LVs may be an intermediary link in a grammaticalization cline, sitting between full-fledged verbs and auxiliaries. As we will see below, synchronic data from Basque and Romance supports Butt's Generalization.

6.1.3. About this chapter

In this chapter we will describe LVCs in Basque and compare them to Romance LVCs, focusing on those Romance languages that are in direct contact with Basque: French and Spanish.

⁷ Cf. Ramchand's (2014:218) *Semantics of Structure Conjecture on the Limits of Lightness*: "The meaning of a light verb and its corresponding heavy alternant are in a subset-superset relation in their conceptual semantics, the light version being a proper subset of the heavy. Only non-syntactic or conceptual information is systematically negotiable within the "same" lexical item. Anything that is present in the heavy version but not in the light must therefore be a species of Type B meaning. At its most pared down, a light verb can only be as light as the structural semantics corresponding to the type A meaning of the pair."

The structure of the chapter is as follows. In section 6.2, we provide a descriptive comparison of LVCs in Basque and Romance: we first describe the range of verbs that can function as LVs in these languages, and, taking Butt’s Generalization and Ramchand’s (2014) remarks as background, we explore their argument- and event-structure properties. We first focus on the LV (section 6.2.1). In section 6.2.2, we turn to the NVE, paying attention to its categorial properties (lexical and phrase-structural category) and its relational properties (case-related properties and the like). In section 6.3 we present a discussion of the (different degrees of) syntactic and semantic cohesion between the LV and the NVE, with a special focus on idiomaticity. Section 6.4 concludes and points out issues that deserve attention in future research. As mentioned above, the discussion is based on Basque, and Romance, mainly French and Spanish, is brought in for comparison.

6.2. A descriptive comparison of Light Verb Constructions in Basque and Romance

While Basque and Romance LVCs share a number of properties that are also common to LVCs crosslinguistically, they also show some differences, partly due to independent syntactic properties of the two linguistic systems, like case. In this section, we offer a description of the morphosyntactic and semantic properties of LVCs in Basque and compare them to Romance LVCs. We focus first on the LV and then on the NVE and its cohesion with the LV.

6.2.1. The Light Verb

In Basque, most LVCs are formed with the LV *egin* ‘do’:⁸

- (3) *agur egin* “do goodbye” ‘greet / say goodbye’, *alde egin* “do side / zone” ‘leave’, *aharrausi egin* “do yawn” ‘yawn’, *aipu egin* “do mention” ‘mention’, *aitor egin* “do confession” ‘confess’, *amets egin* “do dream” ‘dream’, *argi egin* “do light” ‘light up / enlighten’, *arnas(a) egin* “do breath” ‘breathe’, *barre egin* “do laugh” ‘laugh’, *behaztopa egin* “do impediment” ‘bump into / complicate’, *bekatu egin* “do sin” ‘sin’, *berba egin* “do word” ‘talk’, *bultza egin* “do push” ‘push’, *dantza egin* “do dance” ‘dance’, *dei egin* “do call” ‘call’, *doministiku egin* “do sneeze” ‘sneeze’, *duda egin* “do doubt” ‘doubt’, *elurra egin* “do snow” ‘snow’, *erregu egin* “do plea / prayer” ‘beg / pray’, *euria egin* “do rain” ‘rain’, *eztul egin* “do cough” ‘cough’, *gogoeta egin* “do reflection” ‘think, reflect’, *hitz egin* “do word” ‘talk’, *huts egin* “do mistake / shortage” ‘fail / miss’, *ihes egin* “do escape” ‘run away’, *irain egin* “do insult” ‘insult’, *irribarre egin* “do smile” ‘smile’, *iruzur egin* “do trick” ‘mislead, deceive’, *jauzi egin* “do jump” ‘jump’, *kasu egin* “do attention” ‘pay attention’, *keinu egin* “do gesture / sign” ‘gesture, sign’, *kontu egin* “do care” ‘look after, take care’, *korrika egin* “do running (adv.)” ‘run’, *lan egin* “do work” ‘work’, *laztan egin* “do cuddle / caress / kiss” ‘caress, kiss’, *lo egin* “do sleep” ‘sleep’, *min egin* “do pain” ‘hurt’, *negar egin* “do weep” ‘cry’, *oihu egin* “do shout, yell” ‘shout, yell’, *ospa egin* “do «get out!»” ‘leave’, *salto egin* “do jump” ‘jump’, *tiro egin* “do

⁸ In the Basque tradition, LVs are referred to as *egin inergatiboak* ‘do unergatives’ or *I[zen]+egin inergatiboak* ‘do+N[oun] unergatives’. In the French linguistic tradition the term *verbe support* ‘support verb’ is the one most widely used, while in the Spanish tradition we find *verbo soporte* ‘support verb’, *verbo de apoyo* ‘verb of support’, and *verbo liviano* ‘light verb’.

gunshot” ‘shoot’, *topo egin* “do stumble” ‘run into’, *txalo egin* “do applause” ‘applaud’, *zin egin* “do oath” ‘swear under oath’, among many others.⁹

However, Basque has also some LVCs with *hartu* ‘take’ (4), *eman* ‘give’ (5) and *eduki* ‘have’ (Martinez 2015:113-114, Zabala 2004:486-488):¹⁰

- (4) *arnasa hartu* “take breath” ‘breathe’, *atseden hartu* “take repose, rest” ‘rest’, *atsegin hartu* “take pleasure” ‘feel happy, enjoy’, *damu hartu* “take pity, regret” ‘feel sad, regret’, *esku hartu* “take hand” ‘participate, take part’, *gogo hartu* “take mind, will” ‘decide’, *hitz hartu* “take word” ‘compromise’, *indar hartu* “take strenght” ‘strengthen’, *kontu hartu* “take care” ‘take care of, keep in mind’, *lur hartu* “take land” ‘land’, *min hartu* “take pain” ‘get hurt’, *parte hartu* “take part”, *pena hartu* “take pity” ‘feel sad’, *plazer hartu* “take pleasure” ‘enjoy’¹¹, *poz hartu* “take happiness” ‘feel happy’, *su hartu* “take fire” ‘burn’, and few others.
- (5) *amore eman* “give love” ‘yield, give in, collapse’, *argi eman* “give light” ‘light up / enlighten’, *arrazoi eman* “give reason” ‘agree with’, *aurpegi eman* “give face” ‘face’, *begi eman* “give eye” ‘look at’, *bihotz eman* “give heart” ‘encourage’, *bizkar eman* “give one’s back” ‘turn one’s back on’, *buru eman* “give head” ‘finish, accomplish / face’, *damu eman* “give pity” ‘sadden’, *errieta eman* “give scolding” ‘tell off’, *esker eman* “give thanks” ‘thank’, *fede eman* “give faith” ‘trust, vouch for’, *gogo eman* “give mind, will” ‘look, pay attention / think, consider’, *hats eman* “give breath” ‘blow’, *ikara/beldur eman* “give fear” ‘frighten’, *kontseilu eman* “give advise” ‘advise’, *kontu eman* “give account” ‘give an explanation, give account’, *laztan eman* “give cuddle, hig” ‘hug, caress’, *leku eman* “give place” ‘allow’, *lur eman* “give land” ‘bury’, *min eman* “give pain” ‘hurt’, *musu eman* “give kiss” ‘kiss’, *parte eman* “give report” ‘report, inform’, *pena eman* “give pity” ‘make someone feel sad’, *poz eman* “give happiness” ‘make happy’, *su eman* “give fire” ‘set fire to’, and few others.
- (6) *arrazoi eduki* “have reason” ‘be right’, *esku eduki* “have hand” ‘help, support’, *kontu eduki* “have care” ‘be careful’, *min eduki* “have pain” ‘feel pain’, *on eduki* “have good (ADJECTIVE)” ‘maintain, claim’, *pena eduki* “have pity” ‘feel sad’, and few others.

⁹ As seen, Basque LVCs describe daily, general activities (viewed as recognizable, unitary concepts), a well-described tendency among this kind of constructions cross-linguistically (Mithun 1984: 850, Martinez 2015:42, fn. 43).

¹⁰ Rodríguez & García Murga (2003) add to this sample LVCs with *jo* ‘hit, touch, give with no delicacy’, such as *adarra jo* “give the horn” ‘tease’. Zabala (2004:461, 465, 488-493) provides an even wider range of “complex predicates” including verbs such as *bete* ‘fill’ as in *hitza bete* ‘keep one’s word’, *hautsi* ‘break’ as in *hitza hautsi* ‘not keep one’s word’, *jan* ‘eat’ as in *hitza jan* ‘fail to keep one’s word’ or *burua jan* ‘wash someone’s brain’, and so on. These expressions, combining a fully contentful verb and an absolutive case-marked DP, clearly fall beyond the scope of this chapter, which is mainly devoted to LVCs formed by a LV and a bare noun (*hitz egin* ‘talk’) –or by a full verb and a bare noun (*hitz eman* ‘promise’). Moreover, since such cases feature absolutive-marked DPs (*adarra* ‘(the) horn’, *hitza* ‘(the) word’...), it seems more appropriate to view them as the result of a metaphorical (idiomatic) interpretation of expressions which are not *bona fide* LVCs.

¹¹ This example and the two preceding ones correspond to psych predicates, which frequently showed a similar pattern in Old Romance languages, as in Old Catalan *prendre delit*, Old French *prendre plaisir* or Old Spanish *tomar placer* “take pleasure”, ‘enjoy’. See Acedo-Matellán & Mateu (to appear) for a detailed description of analytic psych predicates in Old Catalan.

There are also some expressions involving *eman* ‘give’ and *hartu* ‘take’ that show an extreme degree of coalescence between the LV and the NVE, since they are actually not separable. They are arguably not LVCs anymore, but plain, synthetic verbs:

- (7) *onartu* “take good” ‘accept’, *atzeman* “give hoof” ‘catch, understand’, *hauteman* “give choice” ‘realise, notice’ / choose, *hitzeman* “give word” ‘promise’

For French and Spanish, Alba-Salas (2002: 636–637) provides the following respective lists, in addition to *faire* (French) and *hacer* (Spanish) ‘do’:

- (8) *asséner* ‘deal’ (*asséner un coup* ‘hit’), *avoir* ‘have’ (*avoir une maladie* ‘be sick’), *coller* ‘give’ (*coller une claque* ‘smack’), *commetre* ‘commit’ (*commettre une agression* ‘commit an assault’), *donner* ‘give’ (*donner un conseil* ‘give some advice’), *dire* ‘say’ (*dire des compliments* ‘pay some compliments’), *diriger* ‘direct’ (*diriger une offensive* ‘attack’), *effectuer* ‘carry out’ (*effectuer un paiement* ‘make a payment’), *entamer* ‘initiate’ (*entamer une discussion* ‘initiate a discussion’), *ficher* ‘give’ (*ficher une giffle* ‘slap’), *flanquer* ‘give’ (*flanquer un coup de pied* ‘kick’), *foutre* ‘give’ (*foutre une claque* ‘smack’), *jeter* ‘throw’ (*jeter un regard* ‘cast a glance’), *lancer* ‘launch’ (*lancer une attaque* ‘launch an attack’), *livrer* ‘carry out’ (*livrer une bataille* ‘engage a battle’), *passer* ‘make’ (*passer un coup de téléphone* ‘make a phone call’), *porter* ‘carry’ (*porter un coup* ‘strike’), *poser* ‘put’ (*poser une question* ‘ask a question’), *prendre* ‘take’ (*prendre une décision* ‘make a decision’), *prêter* ‘lend’ (*prêter attention* ‘pay attention’), *procéder* (à) ‘proceed (to)’ (*procéder a une lecture* ‘proceed to a reading’), *subir* ‘undergo’ (*subir une métamorphose* ‘undergo a metamorphosis’)
- (9) *asestar* ‘give’ (*asestar un golpe* ‘hit’), *coger* ‘catch’ (*coger envidia* ‘get envious’), *cometer* ‘commit’ (*cometer un asesinato* ‘commit murder’), *contraer* ‘contract’ (*contraer matrimonio* ‘marry’), *correr* ‘run’ (*correr peligro* ‘be in danger’), *dar* ‘give’ (*dar un paseo* ‘take a walk’), *decir* ‘say’ (*decir un cumplido* ‘pay a compliment’), *dirigir* ‘direct’ (*dirigir una crítica* ‘criticize’), *echar* ‘throw’ (*echar una mirada* ‘give a look’), *efectuar* ‘carry out’ (*efectuar un pago* ‘make a payment’), *ejercer* ‘make’ (*ejercer presión* ‘put pressure’), *experimentar* ‘experience’ (*experimentar una mejora* ‘improve’), *llevar a cabo* ‘carry out’ (*llevar a cabo una privatización* ‘privatize’), *meter* ‘put’ (*meter una bofetada* ‘slap’), *pegar* ‘give’ (*pegar una patada* ‘kick’), *perder* ‘lose’ (*perderle el respeto (a alguien)* ‘lose respect (for someone)’), *pillar* ‘catch’ (*pillar celos* ‘get jealous’), *presentar* ‘present’ (*presentar la dimisión* ‘resign’), *prestar* ‘lend’ (*prestar atención* ‘pay attention’), *proceder* (a) ‘proceed (to)’ (*proceder a una votación* ‘proceed to a vote’), *propinar* ‘give’ (*propinar una paliza* ‘give a beating’), *realizar* ‘carry out’ (*realizar una transacción* ‘carry out a transaction’), *soltar* ‘let out’ (*soltar un grito* ‘shout’), *sufrir* ‘undergo’ (*sufrir un accidente* ‘have an accident’), *tener* ‘have’ (*tener hambre* ‘be hungry’), *tomar* ‘take’ (*tomar represalias* ‘take reprisals’)

The above lists, composed in alphabetical order, mask crucial asymmetries among the verbs: notably, they put basic LVs like French *donner* ‘give’ or Spanish *echar* ‘throw’ at the same level as other “heavier” verbs like French *diriger* ‘direct’ or Spanish *ejercer* ‘exert’. Thus, for the more restricted LVs, there is frequently a true lexical, i.e., non-semantic relation between the LV and the NVE (see also Alonso-Ramos 1998). This is clearly the case with LVs like Spanish *correr* ‘run’, selected by the NVE *peligro*

‘danger’ in *correr peligro* ‘be in danger’. Other verbs can arguably be rendered as register-marked alternates of more basic LVs. For instance, Spanish *ejercer presión* ‘exert pressure’ constitutes a formal rendition of *hacer presión* ‘make pressure’. French and Spanish, with Basque, converge, therefore, with the rest of languages in what constitutes the basic repertoire of LVs: *DO*, *GIVE*, *HAVE*, *TAKE*, etc. Nonetheless, as we will see below, there is a difference between French and Spanish as regards the choice of their most basic activity verb, which is *faire* ‘do’ for the former and *dar* ‘give’ for the latter. Another important difference between, this time, French on the one hand and Basque and Spanish on the other, is that *DO* may head stative, attributive predicates in the former, but not in the latter: *Ce monsieur fait vieux* (Giry-Schneider 1986: 50) ‘This gentleman does old’ ‘This gentleman has an old appearance’. This brings French *faire* closer to Catalan *fer* than to Spanish *hacer* or Basque *egin*.

In section 1.1, we mentioned that the choice of a given LV is not completely free, but that the semantic properties of the NVE may determine the LV chosen. This can be seen when comparing, for example, English and Basque LVCs (see (10)): as Martinez (2015: 78) points out, most English LVC are also found in Basque. However, this is only a tendency, and English and Basque semantically equivalent LVCs may also bear different LVs—cf. English *have* and *give* vs Basque *egin* ‘do’ in (11)—without any relevant difference regarding event- and argument-structure properties:

(10)

English	Basque
<i>take a break</i>	<i>atseden hartu</i>
<i>take part</i>	<i>parte hartu</i>
<i>give a choice</i>	<i>aukera eman</i>
<i>give a kiss</i>	<i>musu eman</i>
<i>give a sight</i>	<i>begi eman</i>
<i>give (an) account</i>	<i>kontu eman</i>
<i>have an intention</i>	<i>intentzio eduki</i>
<i>do a trick</i>	<i>tranpa egin</i>

(11)

English	Basque
<i>have a cry</i>	<i>negar egin</i> ‘do weep’
<i>give a shout</i>	<i>garrasi egin</i> ‘do shout’
<i>have a thought</i>	<i>hausnar egin</i> ‘do meditation’
<i>have a dream</i>	<i>amets egin</i> ‘do dream’
<i>give a call</i>	<i>dei egin</i> ‘do call’

This random comparison between English and Basque, and particularly the mismatches in (11), actually lead us to discuss another important issue that was introduced in section 1.1: the division of syntactic and semantic labour in LVCs. Thus, whereas the semantic contribution of the LV is limited to functional notions related to argument and event structure, the NVE encapsulates the conceptual content of the LVC (the particular event evoked). Interestingly, Basque offers some examples where the same NVE can combine with different LVs, the resulting LVCs showing, however, no difference in meaning, at least at the conceptual level:

(12) a. *argi egin/eman* ‘do/give light’ ‘light up, enlighten’

- b. *arnasa egin/hartu* “do/take breath” ‘breathe’
- c. *atsegin egin/eman* “do/give pleasure” ‘please’
- d. *dei egin/eman* “do/give call” ‘call’
- e. *esker egin/eman* “do/give thanks” ‘thank’
- f. *huts egin/eman* “do/give failure” ‘fail’
- g. *min egin/eman* “do/give pain” ‘hurt’

Moreover, in the Romance area, similar examples are found when comparing Spanish and French:

(13)

Spanish	French	Meaning
<i>dar miedo</i> “give fear”	<i>faire peur</i> “do fear”	‘frighten’
<i>dar vergüenza</i> “give shame”	<i>faire honte</i> “do shame”	‘shame’
<i>dar pena</i> “give sorrow”	<i>faire de la peine</i> “do of the sorrow”	‘provoke sorrow’

However, these facts do not necessarily constitute counterexamples to the former claim regarding the division of labour between the LV and the NVE. Note that in all these pairs from Basque and Romance the event and argument structure remains the same: for example, both *dar miedo* “give fear” and *faire peur* “do fear” require a source of the emotion (the stimulus) as well as a dative-marked argument designating the experiencer of the emotion. Thus, it seems that these exceptional cases can be explained via the semantic closeness of *DO* and *GIVE*, attested in many languages, both verbs being usually interchangeable in the context of LVCs.¹² The particular case of (12)b, where the alternation is between *egin* ‘do’ and *hartu* ‘take’, can easily be accounted for if we consider that *arnasa*, when combined with the former, means ‘breathing’, and when combined with latter, means ‘exhaled air’.

In other cases, though, *egin* ‘do’ and *eman* ‘give’, when combined with a given NVE, yield LVCs with very different meanings:

- (14)
- a. *damu egin* ‘hurt’ ~ *damu eman* ‘cause regret’
 - b. *errieta egin* ‘argue / tell off’ ~ *errieta eman* ‘tell off’
 - c. *hitz egin* ‘talk’ ~ *hitz eman* ‘promise’
 - d. *hots egin* ‘call / sound’ ~ *hots eman* ‘guide / stimulate’
 - e. *ikara egin* ‘tremble’ ~ *ikara eman* ‘scare’
 - f. *kontu egin* ‘look after, take care / suppose’ ~ *kontu eman* ‘give an explanation, give account’

¹² See, for example, the almost systematic equivalence between Spanish *dar* ‘give’ and Catalan *fer* ‘do’: *dar un beso* ~ *fer un petó* ‘kiss’, *dar un abraço* ~ *fer una abraçada* ‘hug’, *dar miedo* ~ *fer por* ‘frighten’, *dar pena* ~ *fer pena* ‘provoke sorrow’, *dar rabia* ~ *fer ràbia* ‘anger’, *dar lástima* ~ *fer llàstima* ‘provoke pity’, *dar envidia* ~ *fer enveja* ‘provoke jealousy/envy’, and so on. Moreover, both verbs turn out to be even more similar, as far as argument structure is concerned, once we adopt the view that the dative, commonly appearing with *GIVE*, is an “added argument” in the sense of Pylkkänen (2002, 2008)—see McFadden (2006) for relevant argumentation in the context of Germanic. Thus, under the applicative hypothesis, it is not the case that *GIVE* has a slot for the dative object which *DO* lacks, but instead both verbs can combine with a dative-introducing head, the applicative.

Actually, obtaining two LVCs with different meanings and different event- and argument-structure properties is what normally occurs in Basque when different LVs are combined with one same NVE (see also Martinez 2015: 114; Zabala 2004: 457-458, 483). And this is what one expects given the above-mentioned division of labour between the two components of the LVC. Thus, to the examples in (14) for the pair *egin* ‘do’/ *eman* ‘give’, we can add the following ones with other LVs, including *hartu* ‘take’ and *eduki* ‘have’:

- (15) a. *arrazoi* ‘reason’ *eman* ‘agree with’ ~ *arrazoi eduki* ‘be right’
 b. *atsegin eman* ‘please’ ~ *atsegin hartu* ‘enjoy, take pleasure in’
 c. *damu hartu* ‘regret’ ~ *damu eman* ‘cause regret’
 d. *esku* ‘hand’ *hartu* ‘participate, take part’ ~ *esku eman* ‘help’
 e. *hats hartu* ‘breathe’ ~ *hats eman* ‘blow’
 f. *kontu hartu* ‘take care of, keep in mind’ ~ *kontu eduki* ‘be careful’
 g. *min hartu* ‘get hurt’ ~ *min eman* ‘cause pain’
 h. *pena hartu* ‘get sad’ ~ *pena eman* ‘sadden’

The examples in (15), where verbs other than *egin* ‘do’ are at play, clearly support Ramchand’s (2014) approach to LVCs, in the sense that the argument and event structure of a given LV is identical to those of their non-LV counterpart. For example, *min hartu* ‘get hurt’ behaves like *liburua hartu* ‘get, receive the book’; and *min eman* ‘give, cause pain’ behaves like *liburua eman* ‘give the book’. In other words, light *eman* ‘give’ and *hartu* ‘take’ display a meaning very close to that of their non-light counterparts, and preserve the number of arguments and their categorial requirements, generally selecting for NPs¹³. By contrast, as will be shown in section 2.2, *egin* ‘do’ allows a wide range of NVEs, including instrumental and locative case-marked DPs, adverbials, and even words not used outside the particular LVC (Zabala 2004: 481–482). Thus, it seems clear that there is a difference between instances with *egin* ‘do’, clearly a light verb, and instances with *eman* ‘give’ or *hartu* ‘take’, which, even when appearing in this type of expressions, have been considered verbs with full semantic content (Zabala 2014: 458, 461). Actually, Zabala’s difference between *DO*-verbs (light) and *GIVE/TAKE*-verbs (fully contentful) could account for the many intra- and cross-linguistic equivalences found, as the ones in (12)-(13). An alternative way to deal with this difference is in terms of the greater or lesser amount of structure lexicalized by the verb (Ramchand 2008): *egin* ‘do’ is more abstract and thus probably lexicalizes only the eventive head *v*. This is in tune with the fact that *egin* ‘do’ instantiates the least marked option to form LVCs, given its wide range of meanings and its flexibility in taking different types of complements; on the contrary, the more marked options are those that resort to the verbs *eman* ‘give’ or *hartu* ‘take’, which also form LVCs but are indistinguishable from their “heavy” counterparts, along the lines of Ramchand (2014).

Particular LVs thus impose their argument- and event-structure properties to the resulting LVC. The predicative nature of the LV is also reflected in the fact that it combines with a particular semantic type of complement: one denoting an event. According to Rodríguez & García Murga (2003), when the NVE combines with *egin* ‘do’, there is a semantic process a la Jackendoff (1990) that turns a noun referring to a

¹³ And occasionally DPs: *bide(a) eman* “give (the) way”, *hats(a) eman* “give (the) breath”, *gogo(a) hartu* “take (the) mind”.

“thing”, e.g. ‘smile’ or ‘word’, into a noun referring to an event: ‘smiling, talking’.¹⁴ Interestingly, as will be shown in section 2.2, LVs can combine with different categories, including DPs, instrumental case-marked DPs, inessive case-marked DPs or adverbials (16), to which, according to these authors, the very same semantic process applies yielding the final meaning of the LVC. In other words, the NVE is always interpreted as denoting an event, no matter what syntactic category it bears.¹⁵ The fact that the very same event can be expressed by different categories (17) seems to provide evidence for this:

- (16) a. *eztula egin* “do the cough” ‘cough’
 b. *hega-z egin* “do flight-INSTR” ‘fly’
 c. *dantza-n egin* “do dance-INES” ‘dance’
 d. *lasterka egin* “do running (ADV.)” ‘run’
- (17) a. *eztul / eztula egin* “do cough/the cough” ‘cough’
 b. *hega-z / hega-n egin* “do flight-INSTR/flight-INES” ‘fly’
 c. *dantza / dantza-n egin* “do dance.ABS/dance-INES” ‘dance’
 d. *laster / lasterka egin* “do run/running (ADV.)” ‘run’

Other data seem to contradict the above-mentioned division of labour between the LV (argument- and event-structure properties) and the NVE (conceptual content). Zabala (2004: 478-479), for instance, argues that the argument structure of the LVC largely depends on the particular NVE that the LV combines with. Thus, in line with Grimshaw & Mester’s (1988) claims for Japanese, she assumes that the LV is thematically incomplete and that the NVE thus transfers to it some or all its arguments, yielding the resulting LVC. An argument put forward in favour of this “fusion” of the argument structure of the NVE and the LV is that the NVE imposes restrictions on the type of external argument of the LVC (Zabala 2004: 479-480). In particular, with meteorological LVCs the subject is a quasi-argument that cannot be phonologically realised, and that is only reflected in the ergative agreement in the auxiliary:

- (18) a. *Euri-a egin du.*
 rain-DET.ABS do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 ‘It has rained.’
- b. **Horr-ek/*Zeru-a-k euri-a egin du.*
 this-ERG/sky-DET-ERG rain-DET.ABS do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 ‘This/The sky has rained.’

Still, it is worth noting that examples such as the next one, while certainly marked, are possible:

¹⁴ We use the term *thing* following Rodríguez & García Murga’s (2003: 433) terminology: «Baina *barre* gauza bati egiten dio erreferentzia, ez egoera bati.» ‘But *barre* refers to a thing, not to a situation.’ It seems to us that this concept must be understood in a broad sense, beyond material objects.

¹⁵ The “semantic coercion” of the NVE as denoting an event is reminiscent of Marantz’s (2005) account of creation predicates like *Bake a cake*, in which the DP *a cake* is also taken to denote an event. An updated view of this type of syntactically driven semantic coercion is that expounded by Wood & Marantz (2017) in terms of contextual alloosemy.

- (19) “Nor-k egi-ten du euri? [...]” egi-ten
 who-ERG do-INF AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG rain do-INF
- dio galde Strepsiades zaharr-a-k
 AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG.DAT3SG ask Strepsiades old-DET-ERG
- Sokrates-i, eta filosofo-a-k honela erantzuten:
 Socrates-DAT and philosopher-DET-ERG thus answer-INF
- “Ez behintzat Zeus-ek, hodei-ek baizik”
 not at_least Zeus-ERG cloud-DET.ERG.PL but
 “Who rains? [...]”, asked old Strepsiades of Socrates, and the philosopher
 answered in this way: “Certainly not Zeus, but the clouds do.”
 (Dakiguna ikasten, Patziku Perurena, Alberdania, 2007, p. 132)

What is worth noticing about examples like (19) is that, while the NVE certainly shapes the *conceptual scene* evoked (i.e., the appearance of rain is usually not conceived as a caused event), it cannot *grammatically* preclude an option licensed by the LV (i.e., *egin* allows the projection of an external argument).

Moreover, the other contrasts (20)-(22) upon which Zabala bases her defence of such a “fusion” actually do not differ much from what is found in any transitive construction, where the verb «expresses a range of predicates depending on the choice of direct object» (Marantz 1984: 25). Thus, it is expected that the LV *egin* ‘do’ requires different arguments depending on the NVE that it combines with: in (20) *egin* combined with *hitz* ‘word’ admits a dative argument, in (21) *egin* combined with *lo* ‘sleep’ does not admit a dative argument, and finally in (22) *egin* combined with *laztan* ‘hug, kiss’ generally requires a dative argument.

- (20) a. Aduna-k hitz egin du.
 Aduna-ERG word do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 ‘Aduna has talked.’
 b. Aduna-k gizon-a-ri hitz egin dio.
 Aduna-ERG man-DET-DAT word do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG.DAT3SG
 ‘Aduna has talked to the man.’
- (21) a. Aduna-k lo egin du.
 Aduna-ERG sleep do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 ‘Aduna has slept.’
 b. *Aduna-k gizon-a-ri lo egin dio.
 Aduna-ERG man-DET-DAT sleep do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG.DAT3SG
 ‘Aduna has slept to the man.’
- (22) a. *Aduna-k laztan egin du.
 Aduna-ERG hug do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 ‘Aduna has hugged.’
 b. Aduna-k laztan egin dio gizon-a-ri.
 Aduna-ERG hug do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG.DAT3SG man-DET-DAT
 ‘Aduna has given the man a hug.’

Zabala’s (2004) position for Basque is similar to that defended by other authors dealing with LVCs in French and Spanish. For Spanish, Alonso-Ramos (1998) claims that the

diathesis of LVs is special, since their syntactic valency changes according to the nominal NVE with which they combine—much as has been shown for Basque in the above examples. She illustrates with the contrast between *tener miedo* ‘have fear’ ‘be afraid’ vs *tener esperanza* ‘have hope’; while the former takes a dative encoding the stimulus, the latter can only take a genitive PP:

- (23) a. Rosa le tiene miedo a la oscuridad.
 Rosa DAT has fear at the darkness
 ‘Rosa is afraid of darkness.’
 b. Rosa tiene esperanza de un cambio.
 Rosa has hope of a change
 ‘Rosa hopes for a change.’

In a similar vein, Rafel (2004: 404) also discusses how the valency of *tener* ‘have’ changes according to its use in a LVC, as has been shown above, or in a run-of-the-mill transitive construction:

- (24) *Juan le tiene un coche (a su madre).
 Juan DAT has a car at his mother

Rafel points out that the licensing of the dative depends on the use of the NVE *miedo* ‘fear’, and that the dative is not licensed in a normal transitive predicate such as the one in (24). An extreme case in the position that the argument structure of the LVC basically depends on that of the NVE is that represented by Gross (1981) or Danlos (1992: 2), the latter considering that the function of the LV (“the support verb”) is “mainly to bear the tense and aspect values of the sentence”.

There are several observations to be made in relation to the above facts, which we hope to show to conform with, rather than jeopardize, Ramchand’s (2014) conjecture on the division of labour between the LV (= argument and event-structure) and the NVE (= conceptual content), as adhered to in this paper. The first thing to notice is that, for instance, *tener miedo* may also surface with a genitive PP encoding the stimulus, undermining the more deterministic stance taken by Alonso-Ramos (1998):

- (25) Rosa tiene miedo de la oscuridad.

What the alternation between this example and (23)a shows, we submit, is that, while the use of the NVE *miedo* ‘fear’, as opposed to *esperanza* ‘hope’, does indeed determine the presence of a stimulus in the conceptual scene evoked, that “argument” may find different ways of realization in the actual sentence, either as a genitive or as a dative. Perhaps more importantly, it can be dropped altogether, the grammaticality of the sentence remaining unaltered:¹⁶

¹⁶ In some cases the complement of the NVE does seem obligatory:

- (i) Pepa hizo alusión *(a los problemas financieros).
 Pepa did hint at the problems financial
 ‘Pepa hinted at the financial problems.’

In these cases, however, we think that the NVE functions a complex event nominal in the sense of Grimshaw (1990), and its complement (*a los problemas financieros* ‘at the financial problems’) is a true structural complement that cannot, therefore, be dropped.

(26) Rosa tiene miedo.

Quite crucially, even in (26) the presence of the stimulus does not fail to be inferred: when we are afraid we are certainly always afraid of something. *Grammatically*, however, there is no need for the stimulus to be expressed in the LVC, and this, we note, must have to do exclusively with the syntactic properties of the construction, as headed by the LV.¹⁷ It is interesting, in this respect, to contrast the LVC at hand with the corresponding synthetic verb *temer* ‘fear’:

(27) Rosa teme *(la oscuridad).

While *tener miedo* ‘have fear’ ‘be afraid’ and *temer* ‘fear’ mean more or less the same, only the former can drop the constituent encoding the stimulus, suggesting that, indeed, argument structure *qua* argument realization is a prerogative of the head of the construction, i.e., the verb, either heavy or light, rather than of the NVE.

With respect to (22), we observe that the dative is not completely out in predicates headed by non-light *tener* ‘have’:

(28) La madrina les tiene regalos a sus ahijados.
 the godmother DAT.PL has presents at her godchildren
 ‘The godmother has presents in store for her godchildren.’

This shows, again, that the *structural* licensing of the dative does not really depend on the complement of *tener* ‘have’, but on some independent configurational condition.¹⁸

It should have become clear, we hope, that we are making a crucial distinction between the arguments licensed structurally, by the configuration headed by the LV,

¹⁷ This discussion is related to observations made by Gross (1976) and Giry-Schneider (1978) for French and taken up, among others, by Alonso-Ramos (1998) and Rafel (2004) for Spanish, namely, that the argument introduced by the NVE—cf. *la oscuridad* ‘darkness’ in (23)—can easily be reanalysed as a constituent of its own (Danlos 1992:10):

- (i) a. Jean a commis [une aggression contre Marie].
 Jean has committed an aggression against Marie
 b. Jean a commis [une aggression] [contre Marie].

Constituency tests like pronominalization, cleft formation, or relativization indeed show that, e.g., *contra Marie* ‘against Marie’ above may be analysed as an independent constituent (see the mentioned works for details). However, this does not make *contra Marie* ‘against Marie’ a true argument, at the same level as *une aggression* ‘an aggression’, as proposed by Alba-Salas (2002: 13) and Rafel (2004: 424) for Spanish, since while the former can be dropped, the latter cannot. Moreover, “le faire”, i.e., *do-so* substitution, can strand the PP *contre Marie*, further revealing its adjunct status:

- (ii) Jean a commis une aggression et il l’a fait contre Marie.
 Jean has committed an aggression and he it=has done against Marie

All in all, while “secondary arguments” like *contra Marie* ‘against Marie’ are certainly participants of the conceptual scene, they are however not licensed as true structural arguments of the construction.

¹⁸ See Pineda (2016) for an implementation of the theory of applicatives (Pylkkänen 2002, 2008; Cuervo 2003) to the analysis of datives in Romance and Basque.

and the participants of the event, encoded as a conceptual property of the NVE, and which are not obligatorily realized.¹⁹

6.2.2. The Non-Verbal Element

Basque LVCs are usually formed by the combination of a LV and a bare nominal element, as shown in all the examples above. Occasionally, the NVE can also be a postpositional phrase (29) or an adverbial expressing an activity **Error! Reference source not found.** (Etxepare 2003: 402-403; Zabala 2004: 466-467; Martinez 2015: 114-126):

(29)

- | | | | |
|--|------------|--|------------|
| a. Hega-n/Hega-z
wing-INES/wing-INSTR do
'Fly' | egin
do | b. Gain-ez
top-INSTR do
'Overfly' | egin
do |
| c. Atze-ra
back-ADL do
'Go back' | egin
do | d. Borroka-n
fight-INES do
'Fight' | egin
do |
| e. Aitzurr-ean
hoe-DET-INES do
'Dig' | egin
do | f. Ardatz-ean
spindle-INES do
'Spin' | egin
do |
| g. Kart-etan
cards-INES do
'Play cards' | egin
do | h. Futbol-ean
football-INES do
'Play football' | egin
do |

(30)

- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| a. Hagin-ka
tooth-ADV do
'Bite' | egin
do | b. Adar-ka
horn-ADV do
'Gore' | egin
do | c. Aitzur-ka
hoe-ADV do
'Dig' | egin
do |
|---------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|------------|

Some LVCs alternate between a version with a bare nominal NVE and a version with a locative or adverbial NVE, as the ones shown in (29) and **Error! Reference source not found.** respectively –note that *-ka* is an adverbializing suffix. Unlike the versions involving a bare nominal NVE, those involving a non-nominal NVE show an iterative meaning (Etxepare 2003: 402-403) or a nuance of a frequently repeated activity (Martinez 2015: 120-126). In addition, the versions with bare nominal NVEs are generally more frequent, except in the case of *korrika egin* “running (adv.) do”, according to Martinez’s corpus study:

(31)

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|---|------------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| a. Arrantza(-n)
fishing(-INES) do | egin
do | b. Arraun(-ean)
oar/rowing(-INES) do | egin
do | c. Borroka(-n)
fight(-INES) do | egin
do |
|--------------------------------------|------------|---|------------|-----------------------------------|------------|

¹⁹ We follow in this respect the different between *structure* and *content arguments* in Grimshaw’s (2005 [1993]) terms and *structure* and *content participants* in Rappaport Hovav & Levin’s (1998) terms. And see also, within Construction Grammar, Goldberg (1995). Notwithstanding our criticism of Alonso-Ramos’s (1998) take on *tener miedo/esperanza* “have fear/hope”, we acknowledge that the difference that we are pointing out roughly corresponds to her distinction between *actant syntaxique* and *actant sémantique*.

‘Fish’		‘Row’		‘Fight’	
d. Dantza(-n)	egin	e. Ehiza(-n)	egin	f. Errieta(-n)	egin
dance(-INES)	do	hunting(-INES)	do	dispute(-INES)	do
‘Dance’		‘Hunt’		‘Dispute’	

(32)

a. Atzapar(-ka)	egin	b. Borbor(-ka)	egin	c. Eztul(-ka)	egin
claw(-ADV)	do	Bubbling(-ADV)	do	cough(-ADV)	do
‘Scratch’		‘Bubble’		‘Cough’	
d. Jauzi(ka)/Salto(ka)	egin	e. Korri(-ka)	egin	f. Laster(-ka)	egin
jump.ADV	do	running(-ADV)	do	run(-ADV)	do
‘Jump’		‘Run’		‘Run’	
g. Musu(-ka)	egin	h. Oihu(-ka)	egin	i. Zotin(-ka)	egin
kiss(-ADV)	do	scream- ADV	do	hiccup(-ADV)	do
‘Kiss’		‘Scream’		‘Hiccup’	

Additionally, the NVE can also be an adjective, as in the LVC *on hartu* ‘accept’ (lit. “good take”) and a particle, as in *goiti egin* ‘vomit’ (lit. “do up”), although these two options are «relatively rare and present a high degree of lexicalisation» (Oyharçabal 2006: 787).²⁰ It is also worth mentioning that the NVE of meteorological LVCs *bero egin* “hot do” ‘be hot’ and *hotz egin* “cold do” ‘be cold’ can function as a noun or as an adjective (Martinez 2015: 54-56).

Focusing now on nominal NVEs, they are inanimate nouns, and they are non-referential (Martinez 2015: 44; Zabala 2004: 470).²¹ Other than that, even though the range of nominals that can appear in Basque LVC is a closed set, there is no semantic property that can apply to all of them: nominals can be abstract (*gogoeta egin* “do meditation” ‘meditate’) or concrete (*buru egin* “do head” ‘face’), countable (*hitz egin* “do word” ‘talk’) or uncountable (*min egin* ‘do harm’ ‘hurt’), and eventive (*arrantza egin* ‘do fishing’) or resultative (*laprast egin* “do slip” ‘slip’) or with no argument or event structure at all (*elurra egin* “do snow” ‘snow’) (Rodríguez & García Murga 2003: 420). Thus Basque contrasts with Japanese, where, according to Grimshaw & Mester (1988), NVEs are always event nouns that transfer their argument structure to the LVC, as mentioned in section 1.2 (see Fernández 1997 for a comparison between Japanese and Basque LVCs). However, Grimshaw & Mester’s proposal can be maintained for Basque under a slightly different view: as argued above, regardless of the type of noun and the readings it may have in other syntactic environments, the NVE, in the context of the LVC, always expresses an event. Recall that considering all Basque NVEs as denoting events goes in line with Rodríguez & García Murga’s (2003: 432-434) semantic analysis, according to which the NVE may refer to a thing, but the final interpretation is achieved at the conceptual level by means of a semantic process (Jackendoff 1990) ensuring that the NVE no longer refers to a thing, but to an event. In addition, given that events inherently lack referentiality, the above-mentioned non-referentiality of Basque NVEs is accounted for (Zabala 2004: 470).

The lack of referentiality is also a property of a small group of Basque NVEs that are not bare nominals but bear a determiner (Martinez 2015: 33-34, 184-185). These LVCs mostly refer to meteorological phenomena and their NVE bears the definite article *-a*

²⁰ Note that *on hartu*, actually written *onartu* ‘accept, admit’, is fully lexicalized and behaves as a transitive verb: *legea onartu* ‘accept the law’.

²¹ A few NVEs, such as *turrit (egin)* ‘mock / fail’ or *laprast (egin)* ‘slip’, are not found in syntactic environments other than LVCs (Zabala 2004:449).

(the only determiner possible in these structures):²² *eguzkia egin* “do sun”, *elurra egin* “do snow”, *euria egin* “do rain”, *haizea egin* “do wind”, *izotza egin* “do ice”, *trumoa egin* “do thunder”, and so on (Martinez 2015: 56-60)²³. In a few other LVCs, again mostly meteorological, the determiner is optional: *hotz(a) egin* “do cold” ‘be cold’ and *bero(a) egin* “do hot” ‘be hot’, *eztul(a) egin* “do cough” ‘cough’ and *arnas(a) egin* “do breath” ‘breath’. In any case, regardless of whether the NVE is determined or not, it is not referential, but has a generic interpretation (Zabala 2004: 470; Martinez 2015: 56-60).

Since the NVE in meteorological LVCs is usually determined but still non-referential, non-referentiality cannot be directly related to the absence of the determiner. Another reason that prevents us from establishing this connection is that in common transitive structures *a*-marked DPs can be found that are not referential. If we compare the LVC *lan egin* “do work” and the common transitive structure *lana egin* (*lana* bearing a determiner *-a*), the latter has to be interpreted with a definite reference (“the job, that job”), but if we look at other common transitive structures such as *etxea egin* ‘build a/the house’ or *ogia jan* ‘eat (the) bread’, whose direct objects cannot appear in an LVC, then the determined direct objects can be either definite (‘the house, that house’, ‘the bread, that bread’) or indefinite (‘a house’, ‘bread’) (Martinez 2015: 63).²⁴ In short, Basque arguments always need to be determined, even if they are generic. Thus, as Himmelmann (2001: 832) points out: «Definiteness, though undeniably of central importance to the grammar and typology of the articles, is only one of a number of meanings that can be conveyed by articles».

Under a wider conception of LVCs, one can find in Basque some constructions where the LV *egin* combines with a determined DP, such as *bizarra egin* “do the beard”

²² Thus, other determiners such as *bat* ‘a, one’, the demonstratives *hau/hori* ‘this, that’ (which induce a necessarily specific interpretation) or the plural definite article *-ak* are not allowed in NVEs. Examples can be found where instead of *-a* the quantifier *asko* ‘very much, a lot’ is used, as in (i), but according to Martinez (2015:58, fn. 64) *asko* refers in this case to the whole meteorological situation, rather than quantifying the noun *huri*:

(i) *Euri asko egin du.*
rain a_lot do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
‘It has rained a lot.’

This contrasts with its use with common direct objects, such as in (ii), where *asko* generally triggers the plural absolutive agreement *-it-* in the verb (actually, there is dialectal variation in this point, with some dialects accepting (ii) with the singular auxiliary *du*):

(ii) *Liburu asko irakurri ditu.*
book a_lot read AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3PL
‘(S)he has read a lot of books.’

However, note that agreement does not constitute a reliable test here: even if *asko* quantified *huri*, we would not see the morphological effect on the verb, since *huri* is uncountable and thus never triggers plural agreement on the verb. Actually, in our view, the null hypothesis involves assuming that *asko* is quantifying directly over *huri* in *Euri asko egin du*. This scenario is reminiscent of what Bosque & Masullo (1998) argue is involved in Spanish synthetic predicates like *sangrar mucho* ‘to bleed a lot’. These authors propose that the degree modifier *mucho* ‘a lot’ quantifies over a nominal predicate *SANGRE* ‘blood’, embedded in the lexico-syntactic representation of the verbal phrase, involving the abstract LVC-like structure DO BLOOD (Hale & Keyser 1993, 2002). The difference between Spanish and Basque would lie in the synthetic vs analytic character of the predicate. On the quantification of the NVE in Basque LVCs, see examples (58) below and Oyharçabal (2006: 792).

²³ It is not surprising that meteorological LVCs are considered a particular class of Basque LVCs by several authors (Zabala 2004; De Rijk 2008; Martinez 2015).

²⁴ An anonymous reviewer points out that the contrast may need to be nuanced, as something like *lan-a egin* “work-a do” can be non-referential too in central dialects of Basque.

‘shave’, *harrikoa egin* “do the washing up”, *erroak egin* “do the roots” ‘settle down’, *bakeak egin* “do the peaces” ‘make peace’. We think that these few cases are the ones that can be considered constructions involving Vague Action Verbs in Basque, where the NVE seems to pattern with full-fledged argumental DPs –see Kearns’s (1988) distinction in section 1.2. In turn, these Vague Action Verbs constructions should be differentiated from others featuring *egin* as a non-light verb: *ogia egin* ‘make the bread’, *lana egin* ‘do the work’, *ohea egin* ‘make the bed’ (Rodríguez & García Murga 2003: 419, 424; Zabala 2004: 476, Martínez 2015: 115-126).

These particular instances aside, and as mentioned in section 1.2, Basque LVCs are generally considered constructions headed by True Light Verbs. Thus, even if, as will be shown in section 3, in some LVCs the NVE may pattern with full-fledged argumental DPs in some respects (word order, partitive case, causative formation), NVEs and argumental DPs are fundamentally different. Most importantly, the former are overwhelmingly bare nominals, whereas the latter need to be determined to be licensed.

Turning to Romance languages, we observe that some LVCs have a synthetic correspondent, whereas others do not. The lists below also show that, unlike Spanish (33), in French LVCs (34) the NVE is usually introduced by a determiner or a partitive (Martínez 2015: 77-78):

- (33) a. *hacer fiesta* “do holiday” ~ *festejar* ‘celebrate’, *hacer mención* “do mention” ~ *mentcionar* ‘mention’, *hacer juramento* “do oath” ~ *jurar* ‘swear’, *hacer elogio* “do praise” ~ *elogiar* ‘praise’, *hacer chantaje* “do blackmail” ~ *chantajear* ‘blackmail’, *hacer daño* “do damage” ‘hurt’ ~ *dañar* ‘damage’, *hacer ayuno* “do fast” ~ *ayunar* ‘fast’
- b. *hacer deporte* ‘do sport’, *hacer mérito* “do merit” ‘mention’, *hacer juerga* “do fun” ‘have fun’, *hacer luto* “do mourning” ‘mourn’, *hacer turismo* ‘do tourism’, *hacer dinero* ‘make money’
- (34) a. *faire mention* “do mention” ~ *mentionner* ‘mention’, *faire (de) la cuisine* “do (of) the cooking” ~ *cuisiner* ‘cook’, *faire la récolte* “do the harvest” ~ *recolter* ‘harvest’, *faire du progrès* “do of the progress” ~ *progrégsser* ‘progress, advance’, *faire le nettoyage* “do the cleaning” ~ *nettoyer* ‘clean’, *faire des études* “do of the studies” ~ *étudier* ‘study’, *faire de l’ombre* “do of the shadow” ~ *ombrager* ‘cast a shadow on’
- b. *faire du sport* “do of the sport” ‘do sport’, *faire du tourisme* “do of the tourism” ‘do tourism’, *faire la ronde* “do the round” ‘go the rounds’, *faire la revue* “do the review” ‘review’, *faire l’amour* “do the love” ‘make love’, *faire la guerre* “do the war” ‘wage war’, *faire fortune* “do the fortune” ‘make one’s fortune’.

The correspondence between LVCs and synthetic predicates in these languages is far from straightforward. Following Piera & Varela’s (1999) discussion on Spanish, we can distinguish the next four possible situations:

- 1) Morphological and semantic affinity: *hacer transbordo* “do transfer” ~ *transbordar* ‘transfer’; French: *faire mention* “do mention” ~ *mentionner* ‘mention’; some doublets exist whose members differ in register value, as in French *faire la guerre* “do the war” ‘wage war’ (less formal) ~ *guerroyer* ‘wage war’ (more formal)
- 2) Morphological affinity without (complete) semantic equivalence: *hacer fiesta* “do holiday” ~ *festejar* ‘celebrate’, *hacer daño* “do damage” ‘hurt’ ~ *dañar* ‘damage’;

French: *faire le récit* “do the account” ‘narrate, tell’ ~ *réciter* ‘recite’ (Giry-Schneider 1986)

- 3) Semantic equivalence without morphological affinity: *hacer punto* “do stitch” ‘knit’ ~ *tricotar* ‘knit’, *dar asco* “give disgust” ‘disgust’ ~ *repugnar* ‘disgust’; in some cases there is a semantic equivalence involving however a difference in register, as in French *faire l’amour* ‘make love’ ~ *baiser, niquer* ‘fuck’.
- 4) LVCs that do not correspond to any synthetic verb, cf. (33)b and (34)b)

Similarly to what has been pointed out for Basque above, we observe that many LVCs in French present an NVE that is truly bare, and may even not be a nominal at all:

- (35) *avoir faim/froid/envie/besoin* “have hunger/fancy/need” ‘be hungry/cold, fancy, need’
- (36) *faire peur/honte/envie* “do fear/shame/envy” ‘provoke fear/shame/provoke envy’
- (37) *prendre plaisir* “take pleasure” ‘enjoy’
- (38) *prêter attention* “lend attention” ‘pay attention’

As pointed out by Acedo-Matellán (2014) for the *avoir* cases, these NVEs are truly bare, since they are caseless (cf. failure of *en*-substitution) and cannot sustain nominal quantification (cf. availability of *très* ‘very’, but not of *beaucoup de* ‘a lot of’):

- (39) —Tu as faim/froid? —*Oui, j’en ai.
—you has hunger/cold? —yes, I=ptve have.1SG
- (40) J’ai {très/*beaucoup de} faim/froid.
I=have very/a lot of hunger/cold
- (41) —Les serpents font peur à Magali?
—the snakes do fear at Magali?
—*Non, ils ne lui en font pas.
—no they NEG DAT PTVE do.3PL NEG
- (42) Les serpents font {très/*beaucoup de} peur à Magali.
the snakes do very/a lot of fear at Magali
- (43) —Thomas prend plaisir à marcher? —*Oui, il en y prend.
—Thomas takes pleasure at walk.INF —yes he PTVE LOC takes

In Spanish the corresponding LVCs do admit nominal quantification, as in *Tengo mucha hambre* “I have much.F hunger” ‘I am very hungry’. Even more conspicuously, and in spite of its proximity to French, the Catalan counterparts behave differently, in allowing both partitive case (as shown by *ne*-cliticization) and nominal quantification (cf. the use of *molta* ‘much.F’):

- (44) —Que tens gana/fred? —Sí, en tinc.
—COMPL have.2SG hunger/cold? —yes, PTVE have.1SG
- (45) Les serps li’n fan molta, de por, a l’Antoni.
the snaked DAT=PTVE do.PL much.F.SG of fear at the=Antoni
‘Antoni is very much afraid of snakes.’

As also observed by Acedo-Matellán (2014), these bare nouns must occupy an argumental (object) position in the structure, a position that can, therefore, not be occupied by any other DP:

- (46) Thomas avait envie *(d') une glace.
 Thomas had fancy of an ice-cream
 'Thomas fancied an ice-cream.'
- (47) Anne-Catherine a faim *(de) fromage.
 Anne-Catherine has hunger of cheese
 'Anne-Catherine craves some cheese.'

From Acedo-Matellán's (2014) perspective, these facts would be a problem for an analysis of such predicates in French as involving incorporation, i.e., fusion of the NVE and the LV at some level of representation (but see also section 3). We turn to incorporation analyses and other approaches to the relation between the LV and the NVE in the next section.

6.3. The syntactic relationship between the LV and the NVE

In the generative tradition, Basque LVCs (48) have often been identified with syntactically unergative verbs, which show a synthetic correlate in other languages,²⁵ such as Romance **Error! Reference source not found.-Error! Reference source not found.**:

- (48) *hitz egin* 'talk', *barre egin* 'laugh', *negar egin* 'cry', *lo egin* 'sleep', *amets egin* 'dream', *salto egin* 'jump', *dantza egin* 'dance', *lan egin* 'work'
- (49) Sp. *hablar* 'talk', *reír* 'laugh', *llorar* 'cry', *dormir* 'sleep', *soñar* 'dream', *saltar* 'jump', *bailar* 'dance', *trabajar* 'work'
- (50) Fr. *parler* 'talk', *rire* 'laugh', *pleurer* 'cry', *dormir* 'sleep', *rêver* 'dream', *sauter* 'jump', *danser* 'dance', *travailler* 'work'

Basing on facts like the analytic realization of unergatives in Basque (and other languages), Hale & Keyser (1993) postulated a universal transitive nature for unergative verbs: that is, unergative (i.e. activity) predicates take an internal argument that is not the subject. Thus, the only difference between the Basque analytic patterns in (48) and the Romance synthetic patterns in **Error! Reference source not found.-Error! Reference source not found.** is whether overt incorporation of the NVE into the LV takes place or not. Actually, even in Basque many complex unergatives have a simplex counterpart, as shown by *dantza egin* 'do dance' and *dantzatu*, both meaning 'dance', and here too the difference between the two options has to do with whether nominal incorporation has taken place or not. If it does not take place (*dantza egin* 'do dance', 'dance'), the derivation will parallel that of a transitive clause (*zerbait egin* 'do something').

However, there is another dimension where *syntactic incorporation* becomes a controversial issue in the theoretical treatment of Basque and, to some extent, Romance

²⁵ See Martínez (2015: 21-32) for a very detailed semantic classification of Basque LVCs that takes into account several previous semantic classifications, especially De Rijk's (2008), but also Rodríguez & García Murga's (2003: 423), Etxepare's (2003: 400-402) and Zabala's (2004: 472-476) among others. As a matter of fact, Etxepare (2003) provides a rich sample of LVCs, distinguishing verbs of emission (sound emission *oihu egin* 'yell', light emission *dir-dir egin* 'shine', verbal emission *errieta egin* 'argue / tell off'), internal body motion (*dar-dar egin* 'tremble'), physical activities (actions against an object or an individual *tiro egin* 'shoot', motion verbs *igeri egin* 'swim', bodily functions *izerdi egin* 'sweat'), mental activities (*duda egin* 'doubt') and behavioral verbs (*axut egin* 'challenge').

LVCs.²⁶ Indeed, beyond the obvious analytic/synthetic morphological dichotomy pointed out above, there is a debate as to whether the NVE in Basque LVCs (*dantza egin*, *hitz egin*) patterns with DOs in common transitive structures or it undergoes syntactic incorporation. The debate on this issue has been intense and has led to a variety of analyses, some emphasizing the parallelism of LVCs with regular transitive structures, and others focusing on the particularities of the NVE in LVCs and arguing instead that Basque LVCs are a subgroup of unergative verbs with noun incorporation (see Lafitte 1944; Sarasola 1977; Levin 1983; Ortiz de Urbina 1986; Uribe Etxebarria 1989; Hale & Keyser 1993, 1997; Bobaljik 1993; Laka 1993; López & Austin 1995; Fernández 1997; Etxepare 2003; Zabala 2004; Oyharçabal 2006; Martinez 2015, a.o.). The lack of a unified view with respect to this issue surely has to do with the non-homogenous behaviour of NVEs in Basque LVCs. Indeed, they pattern with absolutive objects in some cases, but differ from them in others. This is thus directly related to their case properties: some tests indicate that NVEs are case-marked (with absolutive case), but other tests point in the opposite direction, suggesting that the noun holds a connection with the LV that goes beyond that of a run-of-the-mill object, along the lines of noun incorporation. In what follows, some pieces of apparently contradictory evidence as regards this issue are presented.²⁷

²⁶ The term *incorporation* has been used to refer to certain phenomena found in a variety of languages in which verbs overtly host material arguably belonging to their complements, like prepositions (as in Chichewa, Baker 1988) or nouns (as in Siberian Koryak, Mithun 1984). Within generative approaches, and since the extremely influential work of Baker (1988), *incorporation* also refers to the syntactic mechanism proposed to account for these phenomena, to wit, the movement of the head of the verb complement to the immediately c-commanding verbal head (see Haugen 2015 for a recent overview and a new proposal on the nature of incorporation). Since incorporation, in the standard generative approaches, involves head movement, it is worth pointing out that this operation has come under considerable scrutiny at least since Chomsky (1995), who first pointed out the theoretical inconsistencies associated to this operation and proposed to relegate it to the purely morphophonological component of grammar. The debate is far from being settled, with proposals that actual movement (Matushansky 2006) or lack thereof (Brody 2000; Bye & Svenonius 2012) is involved in the phenomena traditionally dealt with under this rubric. For a recent overview, see Barrie & Mathieu (2014), and for interesting theoretical remarks, Haugen (2015).

²⁸ Berro (2015) argues that the NVE occupies the same position as DOs in simplex verbs, basing on the aspectual properties of the predicate. Thus, just like simplex verbs can be aspectually bounded if the DO denotes a bounded scale, the event denoted in complex verbs is also measured by the scalar (aspectual) properties of its NVE (i.e., the root), thus indicating that they occupy the same position—see Harley (2005) for a seminal work on the parallelism between internal argument DPs and roots as regards their contribution to Aktionsart.

(i) *Gau-ez, [bere armairuan borrokan zihardutela] amets egi-ten zuen.*
 dream do-INF AUX.PST.ERG3SG.ABS3SG.
 ‘At night, (s)he used to dream [that they were fighting inside his/her closed].’

- (51) a. *Aduna-k tango-a dantza egin du.
 Aduna-ERG tango-DET.ABS dance do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 b. Adunak tango-a dantzatu du.
 Aduna-ERG tango-DET.ABS dance AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 ‘Aduna has danced the tango.’

This is also the argument that Acedo-Matellán (2014) wields to defend that the case-less NVE in the French LVCs dealt with at the end of the previous section (e.g., *avoir faim* ‘have hunger’ ‘be hungry’) occupies the object position, thus constituting an “unincorporated root”.

That said, the incorporation analysis, whereby the NVE is caseless and undergoes incorporation, can also account for the contrast in (51). Indeed, invoking Chomsky’s (1981) Empty Category Principle, a “second DO” would fail to be licensed, since the trace left behind by the incorporated DO cannot be occupied by another argument. Following Martinez (2015: 177), the unfeasibility of licensing “second DOs” actually shows that, even for those cases in which there is actually phonological evidence of incorporation (such as *hitz egin* ‘do word’ ‘talk’, see below), it is a syntactic process, not a lexical one, unlike that argued to be involved in English *laugh*, formed in the lexical syntax out of *do+laugh* (Hale & Keyser 1993, 2002; Haugen 2015). In this latter kind of incorporation no trace is left behind allowing for a DO (a cognate object) to be projected—cf., e.g., *laugh a good laugh*.³⁰

Both the proponents of the transitive analysis and those of the incorporation analysis have put forward many other arguments, based on a variety of syntactic tests (see below). However, since not all Basque LVCs show a homogenous behavior, most

However, these apparent double object constructions (which are also found with ditransitive verbs, such as *abisatu* ‘tell [DO-ABS me] [DO subordinate clause]’) can easily be accounted for under the assumption that completive subordinate clauses don’t need case, or are self-sufficient as far as case is concerned (Pesetsky & Torrego 2001).

³⁰ Two LVCs in Basque are exceptional in that they allow a DO, namely *huts egin* ‘do failure/empty’ ‘miss’ and *hots egin* ‘do noise/rumor’ ‘call, propagate’ (Oyharçabal 2006: 791, fn. 6; Martinez 2015: 172, 377-378):

- (i) Ume-a-k eskol-ak huts egin ditu.
 kid-DET.ABS-ERG class-ABS.PL failure/empty do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3PL
 ‘The kid missed the classes’
 (ii) Gizon-a-k berrion-a hots egin du
 man-DET.ABS-ERG good_news-DET.ABS noise/rumor do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 ‘The man spread the good news’

In these cases a lexicalization process has taken place, so that the argument structure of the LVC includes a slot for a DO with the Theme-role. That a reanalysis has taken place in these cases is also evinced by phonology, *huts egin* and *hots egin* being generally pronounced as single words with a single accent: *hutségin*, *hotségin*. In other words, there is no longer any trace preventing the merger of a DO. Rather, there has been a reanalysis yielding a transitive verb able to take a full-fledged DP as complement that can check the structural absolutive case (Martinez 2015: 172, 377-378). The cases in (i) and (ii) could thus be seen as instances of Mithun’s (1984:857) case-manipulating type of incorporation, whereby the case left by the incorporated argument is available for another argument (until then an oblique), which is thus promoted.

We think that *huts egin*—but not *hots egin*—is amenable to a different analysis, namely, that *huts*, which can also be an adjective meaning ‘empty’, is a secondary predicate rather than an argument. Specifically, *huts* would be a predicate of the DO, which would then be its external argument: *trena huts egin* ‘make the train empty, missed’, i.e., ‘miss the train’. If this analysis is on the right track, *huts egin* would pattern with the above-mentioned *onartu*, whose NVE is also an adjective, *on* ‘good’.

syntactic tests have actually been used to justify both views. In particular, the similarities and contrasts between NVEs and regular DOs arise when the focus is put on the degree of cohesion between the LV and the NVE. As we shall see, the apparently contradictory evidence in fact points out that while some Basque LVCs may be the result of an incorporation process, others cannot be. To make matters worse, the non-homogenous syntactic behaviour of Basque LVCs does not only depend on the particular LVC, since differences across dialects and registers are also at play (see Oyharçabal 2006), thus making it difficult to find systematic patterns that allow to tip the scales towards an analysis or the other. It seems therefore that the most adequate way to proceed is by assuming the existence of syntactically different types of LVCs in Basque.

One first type of Basque LVC involves constructions that behave as common transitive structures, formed by a transitive verb and its DO. Evidence of their run-of-the-mill transitive behaviour includes the separability of the LV and the NVE in interrogative sentences and focus structures (see (53)-(56)), and availability of partitive case marking on the NVE in negative sentences (57) (Etxepare 2003: 403):

- (52) Aduna-k dantza egin du.
 Aduna-ERG dance do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 'Aduna has danced.'
- (53) Nor-k egin du dantza?
 who-ERG do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG dance
 'Who has danced?'
- (54) ADUNA-K egin du dantza.
 Aduna-ERG do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG dance
 'ADUNA has danced.'
- (55) DANTZA egin du Aduna-k.
 Dance do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG Aduna-ERG
 'Aduna DANCED.'
- (56) Dantza, Adunak EGITEN du.
 'As for dancing, Aduna does dance'
- (57) Aduna-k ez du dantz-ik egin.
 Aduna-ERG not AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG dance-PTVE do
 'Aduna has not danced.'

These LVCs pattern with regular transitive constructions also in that their NVE, qua incremental theme, can be quantified (58)a just like any incremental theme of a non-light verb (58)b (Oyharçabal 2006: 792):

- (58) a. Aduna-k lo gutxi egin du.
 Aduna-ERG sleep little do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 'Aduna has slept a little.'
- b. Aduna-k ogi gutxi jan du.
 Aduna-ERG bread little eat AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 'Aduna has eaten some bread.'

An additional piece of evidence for the transitive analysis comes from causative contexts (Ortiz de Urbina 1989: 47). The NVE behaves as a canonical argument in the formation of causatives, since the subject of the LVC (59) takes the dative case in the causative (60), just like the causee of a causativized transitive predicate (61):

- (59) Aduna-k dantza egin du.
 Aduna-ERG dance do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 ‘Aduna has danced’
- (60) Aduna-ri dantza egin-arazi diote.
 Aduna-DAT dance do-cause AUX.PRS.ERG3PL.ABS3SG.DAT3SG
 ‘They have made Aduna dance’
- (61) Aduna-ri afari-a antol-arazi diote.
 Aduna-DAT dinner-DET.ABS prepare-cause AUX.PRS.ERG3PL.ABS3SG.DAT3SG
 ‘They have made Aduna prepare the dinner’

However, not all Basque LVCs display the same behaviour in the battery of syntactic contexts just presented. For example, in contrast with (57), not all NVEs can be partitive-marked, as pointed out by Etxepare (2003: 404) and Zabala (2004: 451-452) and thoroughly assessed by Martinez (2015: 247-277):

- (62) a. *Aduna-k ez du laprast-ik egin
 Aduna-ERG not AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG slip-PTVE do
 b. *Aduna-k ez du alde-rik egin
 Aduna-ERG not AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG side-PTVE do
- (63) a. Aduna-k ez du laprast egin.
 Aduna-ERG not AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG slip do
 ‘Aduna has not slipped.’
 b. Aduna-k ez du alde egin.
 Aduna-ERG not AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG side do
 ‘Aduna has not left.’

Moreover, even those LVCs showing partitive case-marking do not exactly replicate the behaviour of a common transitive structure; indeed, for LVCs such case marking is not compulsory (64), whereas for regular transitive structures it is (65):

- (64) a. Ez dut lo egin.
 not AUX.PRS.ERG1SG.ABS3SG sleep do
 ‘I haven’t sleep.’
 b. Ez dut lo-rik egin.
 not AUX.PRS.ERG1SG.ABS3SG sleep-PTVE do
 ‘I haven’t sleep.’
- (65) a. *Ez dut liburu irakurri.
 not AUX.PRS.ERG1SG.ABS3SG book read
 ‘I haven’t read a/any book.’
 b. Ez dut liburu-rik irakurri.
 not AUX.PRS.ERG1SG.ABS3SG book-PTVE read
 ‘I haven’t read a/any book.’

Thus, the existence of the case-less alternates above, whether general (63) or circumscribed to a particular dialect or register (Oyharçabal 2006) (64)a, favours an incorporation analysis.³¹

Such an incorporation analysis would also allow us to account for the differences regarding the adjacency between the NVE and the LV. As a matter of fact, in contrast to what was shown in (53)-(56) for *dantza egin*, some NVEs cannot be separated from the LV at all, unlike common DOs (Zabala 2004: 452-453). Thus, the following examples, involving interrogative sentences (66) and focus structures **Error! Reference source not found.-Error! Reference source not found.**, should be contrasted with (54)-(56). Also, another sign of incorporation in the case of *hitz egin* (actually often written *hitzegin*) comes from its phonological pattern, bearing one single accent: *hitzégin*, to be contrasted, for instance, with that of *negar egin*, *negár egín*.

- (66) *Nor-k egin du hitz?
 who-ERG do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG word
 Intend. ‘Who has talked?’
- (67) *ADUNA-K egin du hitz.
 Aduna-ERG do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG word
 Intend. ‘ADUNA has talked.’
- (68) *HITZ Aduna-k egin du.
 word Aduna-ERG do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 Intend. ‘TALK, has Aduna done.’
- (69) *Hitz, Aduna-k EGI-TEN du.
 word, Aduna-ERG do-PRS AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 Intend. ‘As for talking, Aduna does talk.’

Likewise, as regards quantification, LVCs and transitive structures do not necessarily behave alike, in spite of what we have shown in (58). Indeed, in LVCs the quantifier may occupy a different position, in such a way that the noun+quantifier sequence we saw in (58)a, repeated here as (70)a, alternates with (70)b, where the quantifier *gutxi* targets the whole VP instead of just the NVE, the latter option arguably signalling incorporation. Here too variation is dialectal or idiolectal, and it even may depend on the particular LVC. For example, with *hitz egin* **Error! Reference source not found.** the quantifier+LVC sequence seems to be preferred all over the linguistic domain (Oyharçabal 2006:802):

- (70) a. Aduna-k lo gutxi egin du.
 Aduna-ERG sleep little do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 b. Aduna-k gutxi lo egin du.
 Aduna-ERG little sleep do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 ‘Aduna has not slept much.’
- (71) a. ??Aduna-k hitz gutxi egin du.

³¹ There is no exhaustive dialectal survey on this topic. Oyharçabal (2006) observes some *tendencias* within dialects (and registers) but, in spite of some remarks on how some other dialects behave, he mainly focuses on Basque eastern varieties, i.e., those spoken in the French Basque Country (Iparralde).

- Aduna-ERG word little do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 b. Aduna-k gutxi hitz egin du.
 Aduna-ERG little word do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 ‘Aduna has not talked much.’

It is interesting at this point to go back to the French LVCs involving a case-less NVE, like *avoir faim* ‘be hungry’ or *faire peur* ‘scare’, since they behave differently from Basque *hitz egin* ‘talk’ and pattern with *lo egin* in allowing for degree quantifiers—albeit non-nominal!—to intervene between the LV and the NVE:

- (72) Marjorie a très faim.
 Marjorie has very hunger
 ‘Marjorie is very hungry.’
 (73) Les serpents font très peur à Magali.
 the snakes do very fear at Magali
 ‘Magali is very afraid of snakes.’

The position of manner adverbials such as *ondo*, *ongi* ‘well’ or *gaizki* ‘badly’ also reveal differences between LVCs and ordinary transitive structures. Whereas with the latter the unmarked order is S O Adv V (74)a, with the former two options are possible: in (75)a, available at least in Western dialects, the LVC is treated like a transitive structure, whereas in the more general (75)b (cf. Oyharçabal 2006: 794), the LVC is treated like an intransitive structure—thus, by hypothesis, signalling incorporation. Here again, we find variation depending on the particular LVC. For example, *hitz egin* is not grammatical if treated as a transitive structure (76)a, only the option involving incorporation is good (76)b:

- (74) a. Aduna-k liburu-a ongi irakurri du.
 Aduna-ERG book-DET.ABS well read AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 ‘Aduna read the book well.’
 b. *Aduna-k ongi liburu-a irakurri du.
 Aduna-ERG well book-DET.ABS read AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 (75) a. Aduna-k lan ongi egin du.
 Aduna-ERG work well do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 b. Aduna-k ongi lan egin du.
 Aduna-ERG well work do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 ‘Aduna has worked well’
 (76) a. *Aduna-k hitz ongi egin du.
 Aduna-ERG word well do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 b. Aduna-k ongi hitz egin du.
 Aduna-ERG well word do AUX.PRS.ERG3SG.ABS3SG
 ‘Aduna has talked well.’

So far we have seen that variation depends on the particular LVC (with cases such as *hitz egin* favoring the incorporation analysis in general) but also on geographic variation. In particular, Oyharçabal (2006) finds quite a general tendency in Eastern dialects to avoid the treatment of the NVE as an object, thus preferring incorporation—which otherwise is also possible in other dialects or even idiolects. This observation nicely fits with Berro’s (2010:4) claim that “complex unergatives are much more common in southern varieties [that is, those in contact with Spanish: our clarification, VA&AP],

whereas simplex are preferred in northern ones [that is, those in contact with French: our clarification, VA&AP].”

The tendency shown by Eastern dialects can also be witnessed in the treatment of LVCs in causative contexts: in contrast to what we saw in (60), Eastern dialects do not always treat the causee of a LVC as the causee of a transitive verb (with dative) (77), since it may also appear with absolutive case (78), as the causee of an intransitive verb (thus indicating that incorporation has taken place) (Epelde & Oyharçabal 2012):³²

- (77) Aduna-ri dantza egin-arazi diote.
 Aduna-DAT dance do-cause AUX.PRS.ERG3PL.ABS3SG.DAT3SG
 ‘They have made Aduna dance.’
- (78) Aduna dantza egin-arazi dute.
 Aduna dance do-cause AUX.PRS.ERG3PL.ABS3SG
 ‘They have made Aduna dance.’

Last, but not least, NVEs present a strong dissimilarity with DOs: whereas common DOs must bear a determiner 0 NVEs (generally) lack it **Error! Reference source not found.** (Oyharçabal 2006: 793-794).

- (79) *Liburu irakurri dut.
 book read AUX.PRS.ERG1SG.ABS3SG
 ‘I have read book.’
- (80) Barre/Lo/Dantza³³ egin dut.
 laugh/sleep/dance do AUX.PRS.ERG1SG.ABS3SG
 ‘I have laughed, slept, danced.’

Thus, the lack of a determiner is argued to signal incorporation (Martinez 2015). Nonetheless, this difference can be accounted also in the transitive analysis, for instance by postulating that NVEs and plain DOs receive case differently (cf. Laka 1993).

³² Epelde & Oyharçabal (2012) propose a contact-based explanation: in French, with which Eastern dialects are in contact, the causee of unergative predicates is accusative (i); in turn, Western dialects are in contact with Spanish, and in particular with the Spanish spoken in the Basque Country, which is *leísta* and thus marks the causee of unergatives with dative case (*Tu le haces reír, Yo le hago bailar*). Actually, with simplex unergatives (ii) the dialectal divide is even more marked: whereas in Western dialects dative is more generally used (iii), in Eastern dialects absolutive is normally found (iv) (Ricardo Etxepare, p.c.; Oyharçabal & Epelde 2012).

- (i) *Tu le fais rire, Je le fais danser*
 you CL.3SG.M.ACC make.PRS.2SG laugh, I CL.3SG.M.ACC make.PRS.1SG dance ‘
 ‘You make him laugh, I make him dance’
- ii) Aduna-k dantzatu du.
 Aduna-ERG dance AUX.PRS.ERG3PL.ABS3SG
 ‘Aduna has danced.’
- iii) Aduna-ri dantz-arazi diote.
 Aduna-DAT dance-cause AUX.PRS.ERG3PL.ABS3SG.DAT3SG
 ‘They have made Aduna dance.’
- iv) Aduna dantz-arazi dute.
 Aduna dance-cause AUX.PRS.ERG3PL.ABS3SG
 ‘They have made Aduna dance’

³³ The *-a* ending of *dantza* does not correspond to the determiner, but is part of the nominal root, making ‘dance’ and ‘the dance’ formally equal. Compare: *hitza* ‘word’ ~ *hitza-a* ‘the word’ ~ *hitza bat* ‘one word’ and *dantza* ‘dance’ ~ *dantza* ‘the dance’ ~ *dantza bat* ‘one dance’.

To summarize, NVEs in Basque LVCs pattern with absolutive objects in some cases, but differ from them in others. What one can conclude from all the previous tests and studies on Basque LVCs is that there is no single analysis for all of them; rather, whereas some LVCs pattern with transitive structures, some others show what can be taken as signals of syntactic incorporation. As Oyharçabal (2006) suggests, Basque LVCs constitute a non-homogeneous set and the degree of cohesion between the LVC and the NVE, and thus whether there is incorporation or not, is subject to dialectal and idiolectal variation, with some particular LVCs such as *hitz egin* ‘do word’ ‘talk’ being a generalized case of incorporation across varieties. Basque LVCs can be thus seen as forming a *continuum*, in Martinez’s (2015: 350) terms, comprising the three groups of LVCs that we next describe.

At the beginning of the continuum, we find transitive-like structures, such as *dantza egin* ‘do dance’ ‘dance’, *negar egin* ‘do weep’ ‘weep’, *irribarre egin* ‘do smile’ ‘smile’ and so on. As in common transitive structures, in Basque LVCs the auxiliary is **edun*, the subject bears ergative case, and the NVE functions as a DO, which can bear partitive case and can be separated from the verb. However, although this type of LVCs has a transitive syntactic structure, they show morphological, semantic and syntactic properties that distinguish them from common transitive structures (Martinez 2015: 337, 373).

At the end of the continuum, we find the fossilized LVCs, such as *alde egin* (*aldegin*), *hanka egin*, *ospa egin*, *hitz egin* (*hitzegin*), *hots egin* and a few others. These can be syntactically accounted for as instances of incorporation and, as a result, they do not admit partitive case, they show adjacency to the verb, etc.—actually, these LVCs are generally phonologically treated as one single word, e.g. *aldégin*, *hitzégin* and so on. As expected, many LVCs with a very tight relation between their components have idiomatic readings, as clearly exemplified by *alde egin* ‘do side/zone’ ‘leave’, *hanka egin* ‘do leg’ ‘leave’ (Martinez 2015: 337, 347-348), and they contrast with LVCs whose word order can be altered and have a compositional reading (e.g. *dantza egin* ‘do dance’ ‘dance’).

Finally, there is a group of LVCs presenting a behaviour ambiguous between these two extremes (e.g. *amets egin* ‘dream’, *barre egin* ‘laugh’) (Martinez 2015: 337).

6.4. Conclusions

We have presented a description of LVCs in Basque, and we have compared them with LVCs in Romance, mainly French and Spanish, keeping in mind Ramchand’s (2014) position that there is no fundamental difference between LVCs and the constructions headed by the same verbs in their non-light use (cf., e.g., Basque *lo egin* ‘do sleep’ ‘sleep’ vs *ogia egin* ‘make bread’). Rather, it is the nature of the NVE, as opposed to other DOs, that makes LVCs special. This hypothesis is paired with the assumption that in LVCs the LV, as head of the construction, is responsible for its event and argument-structure properties, while the NVE encodes the conceptual scene evoked.

We have dealt with prominent discussions on the syntax and semantics of LVCs in Basque, and also French and Spanish. With respect to the nature of the LV, for instance, we have remarked that the choice of LV is generally meaningful, and that it is only *DO* and *GIVE* that seem to give rise to synonymous LVCs, at least at the conceptual level, both within Basque and when we compare French (favouring *DO*) and Spanish (favouring *GIVE*).

We have also paid attention to the NVE and its categorial properties. Basque, unlike French and Spanish, often allows a type of LVC in which the nominal NVE appears in the inessive case, or endowed with an adverbial suffix, the resulting LVC displaying

peculiar aspectual properties. As regards unmarked nominal NVEs, we have shown that they can be bare, i.e., determinerless and caseless, in Basque and French—unlike Spanish and Catalan. For Romance, we have also explored the different kinds of relations—semantic and morphological—between LVCs and their synthetic counterparts.

Finally, a discussion has been dedicated to the degree of cohesion between the LV and the NVE. It has been shown that there is empirical evidence pointing in diverse directions as regards this issue: the NVE is in some cases quite syntactically independent of the LV, in other cases it seems to be somehow fused with it (i.e., incorporated into it), and, finally, there are cases that lie in between these two extremes. Dialectal and lexical factors have been pointed out as predictors of this variation in Basque.

It should be clear from these conclusions that, much in the spirit of Butt's (2010) title, Basque (and Romance) LVCs constitute a jungle, and we are still hacking away.

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