Sara Gómez Seibane

Exploring historical linguistic convergence between Basque and Spanish

Abstract: Null objects, female *leísmo*, i.e., the use of the dative *le*/*s* used as direct object pronouns for female referents, and the OV pattern with new information are frequent in spoken Basque Spanish. These (morpho)syntactic phenomena are absent (or extremely limited) in non-contact Spanish varieties and have their equivalent in Basque. Therefore, these structures are said to have been induced by the long-standing contact between Basque and Spanish.

I have explored these phenomena in a corpus of letters written by Basque-Spanish bilinguals during the 18th and 19th century, an important moment in the spread of Spanish to now bilingual areas due to literacy. These data have then been compared to those from personal letters written by Spanish monolinguals. I have performed descriptive and inferential statistical analyses, using IBM SPSS Statistics 22.0, and have also analysed the data qualitatively. Results show that variation is due to internal and external factors, caused by linguistic convergence mechanisms, similar to the processes of contact-induced grammatical replication.

Keywords: null objects, dative, *le*/*s*, female referents, OV, female *leísmo*, Spanish, Basque Spanish, convergence

1 Introduction

The use of null objects as in (1), dative *le*/*s* used as direct object pronouns for female referents (*leísmo*) (2), and a higher percentage of OV word pattern with new information (3) have been identified to be characteristic of the Spanish

Note: This research is part of the project "COREC: Corpus Oral de Referencia del Español en Contacto. Fase I: Lenguas Minoritarias" headed by Azucena Palacios (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid) and Sara Gómez Seibane (Universidad de La Rioja), funded by the Spanish Ministry for Science and Innovation (Ref. PID2019-105865GB-I00). I am very grateful to Lorena Saínz-Maza Lecanda for her helpful revision of the English translation. I gratefully acknowledge the constructive comments of the anonymous referees. A previous version of this work was presented at the *International Conference on Linguistics of Ibero-Romance Languages. Ibero-Romance in Contact and in Contrast*, Ghent University, on 14–16 Dec. 2015. All errors remain strictly my own.

Sara Gómez Seibane, Universidad de La Rioja

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110736250-003

spoken in the Basque Country,[1] an autonomous community in northern Spain along the coast of the Bay of Biscay, where Basque and Spanish are in contact (Landa 1995; Gómez Seibane 2012a; 2012b; Camus Bergareche/Gómez Seibane in this volume).[2]

(1) *No encuentro <u>mis llaves</u>*
not find.1SG my keys
Pensaba que ***Ø*** *tenía en el bolsillo.*
thought.1SG that NCL kept.1SG in the pocket
'I can't find my keys. I thought I kept them in my pocket'.

(2) ***Le***$_i$ *vi <u>a María</u>*$_i$ *en la escuela*
CL saw.3SG ACC Mary in the school
'I saw Mary at school'.

(3) *<u>Unos</u> <u>libros</u> compró ayer*
some books bought.3SG yesterday
'He bought some books yesterday'.

Different theoretical frameworks and methodologies have shown that language variation and change in language contact situations can be explained through both internal processes and external influence, although very often the precise role played by internal factors and contact is not clear (Aikhenvald 2007; Thomason 2010; Leglise/Chamoreau 2013). The processes and outcomes of contact settings depend on a number of sociohistorical and linguistic factors, including the duration and regularity of contact, the structure of the languages in contact, and the degree of speakers' bilingualism and awareness, among others.

1 Nowadays, the Basque speaking territory is divided into seven provinces in Spain and France. Since the 1960s, the Basque language has undergone a standardisation process promoted by the Basque Language Academy. Since 1979, Basque has been one of the official languages in four Spanish provinces: Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa and Araba (all in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country) and the north of Navarre. Especially in areas where Basque is co-official, the number of speakers of this minority language has increased in the last decades from below 600,000 to 775,000, according to data processed by Eustat, the Basque Statistics Office in 2006 (EUSTAT 2008).

2 In the following examples, clitics and null objects (Ø), glossed as NCL, will be highlighted in bold, and referents will be underlined. When elements are co-referential, they will be co-indexed. Left-peripheral constituents at the beginning of the clause in preverbal position will also be underlined.

The contact between Basque, the only non-Indo-European language in Western Europe (Trask 1997, 358), and Romance has been taking place for about two millennia.[3] It is well known that Basque and Spanish are typologically different languages. Basque is a genetically isolated language with a subject-object-verb (SOV) configuration; it has a strongly agglutinating morphology and ergative alignment of case-marking (Trask 1997, 83). Spanish, on the contrary, is a Romance language with an SVO word order, a synthetic language (in particular, with relational synthesis), and displays an indirective alignment type (García-Miguel 2015). Notwithstanding this, typological differences do not exclude contact-induced changes. In fact, if two genetically unrelated languages are in contact and share a series of patterns or constructions, these have probably been transferred or borrowed from one to the other (Aikhenvald 2007, 2–4).

Basque and Spanish co-exist within their respective and complementary functional areas (Camus Bergareche/Gómez Seibane 2010, 227–231). From the end of the Middle Ages and during the Modern Period, for a large section of the middle and lower social classes, Basque was the native language that was used orally in everyday life, especially in rural areas. Spanish, on the contrary, was the written language for every document produced by any authority, be it the central or local government, and the church, as well as for trading relations. In fact, since the end of the 18th century, Spanish was the only language taught at schools and, therefore, people who reached a certain level of education were able to speak and write in Spanish. Consequently, a situation of diglossia persisted for centuries, and Basque-Spanish bilingualism was only present in the upper class.

3 The existence of Basque became known after the arrival of the Romans in Spain and Gaul in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC. However, it was not until the 10th century that documents with Basque proper names and place names were found in Araba and in some parts of the Castilian territory, where the presence of Basque might have been a consequence of medieval repopulation (Trask 1997, 35–42; Hualde 2003, 9). Although Basque was not an official language in historical times, in the French provinces of the Basque Country books were regularly published in Basque (songs, poems, prayers epitaphs and personal letters) in the 16th and 17th centuries. During these centuries, the northern boundary remained stable. Yet, in the four Spanish provinces, the language was constantly losing territory due to the pressure of Spanish, whose presence increased over the coming centuries when the Bourbon monarchy declared Spanish to be the national language and established it as the official language in schools (Camus Bergareche/Gómez Seibane 2010). Even though constant migrations of Spanish speakers to these four provinces at the beginning of the 20th century and Franco's dictatorship (1939–1975), during which the Spanish was declared Spain's only official language, accelerated the strong geographical recession of Basque, the new economic and cultural elite started several activities in favour of the Basque language and its traditions at the end of 19th century in order to protect and recover them (Trask 1997, 23–25; Hualde 2003, 10–11).

However, since the 19th century, native speakers of Basque who were in contact with Spanish in the cities (e.g. employees and servants of rich families) started to acquire some proficiency in Spanish. At the same time, during this century, more school attendance caused an increasing literacy rate in Spanish. The percentage of people who were able to read and write in Spanish in the Basque Country has thus been constantly growing, exceeding even the average for Spain (see Table 1).

AU: The cross references to figures, tables and equations are highlighted for the author/editor to check and confirm its correct placement. These highlights will be removed in the next stage. Please make changes if necessary.

Table 1: Literacy rate in the Basque Country and Spain (1860–1877) (Dávila Balsera/Eizagirre/Fernández 1995, 50).

	1860	1877
Gipuzkoa	19.6%	27.7%
Araba	41.5%	48.3%
Bizkaia	26.3%	35%
Spain	19.9%	24.5%

From this moment onwards, Basque-Spanish bilingualism experienced a progressive increase, not just in the Basque Country areas bordering the Spanish-speaking territories, such as the West of Bizkaia and the South of Araba, but increasingly throughout the entire Basque-speaking territories (Camus Bergareche/Gómez Seibane 2012, 4–8). This growth of the bilingual population also entailed the spread of the sub-standard variety of Spanish known as Basque Spanish. This variety has particular forms and patterns, many of which are the by-product of language contact. As a result, these linguistic features have turned into local features acquired by bilinguals and monolinguals in Spanish who have lived in the Basque Country for most of their lives.

In this paper, I focus on three contact-induced constructions resulting from linguistic convergence between Basque and Spanish. In brief, I will demonstrate that three Basque Spanish structures exhibiting internal variation have been activated and/or reanalysed due to exposure to the Basque language. This chapter is organised as follows: Section 2 provides a brief overview of the most important facts regarding contact-induced changes and linguistic convergence, while Section 3 presents the corpus and the methodology, which makes use of both quantitative and qualitative criteria. The empirical findings are then evaluated: null objects are discussed in Section 4, *le*/*s* for female referents as direct objects in Section 5, and the OV pattern in Section 6. Finally, Section 7 offers a few concluding remarks.

2 Theoretical framework: contact-induced changes and linguistic convergence

I assume the theoretical framework provided in Palacios (2007; 2013), which assumes two premises. First, linguistic changes in language contact scenarios are complex and are due to a combination of external and internal factors. Second, contact-induced changes arise from the communication needs of bilingual speakers, resulting thus from communication strategies in bilingual environments. I also adopt Matras' approach to language contact (2009) as a continuum of uses rather than as a system. In his view, the bilingual (or multilingual) speakers have a complex repertoire of forms and structures. This repertoire is not organised in different language systems but associated with social activities and regulated by the prescriptive attitudes of the speech community.

Based on these premises, Palacios (2007, 262) proposes a basic distinction between (i) *direct* contact-induced changes, which incorporate any lexical or structural features from one language to another and (ii) *indirect* ones, in which no linguistic material is incorporated directly from the other language. This paper focuses on the latter. In these indirect changes, linguistic *convergence* allows two languages, A and B, to become more alike with respect to certain features and structures, without necessarily sharing those forms (Aikhenvald 2007, 45; Palacios 2013, 194–195). Convergence will be perceptible in B due to (i) a change in the frequency of an existing phenomenon, (i) the gaining of a new pragmatic meaning by a certain form, (iii) the expansion or simplification of a paradigm, and (iv) the increase or decrease of syntactic and semantic restrictions for a particular linguistic feature. Therefore, convergence is the result of bilingual speakers' syncretisation of processing operations present in the two languages, which allows them to apply similar mental organisation procedures to their communicative interaction in both languages (Matras/Sakel 2007, 835).

Concerning the permeability of linguistic systems, it seems that sufficient contact intensity and duration can trigger convergence in forms and structures at all levels of the grammar, including the morphological core. However, certain linguistic patterns, such as word order and pragmatic markers, are more likely to change in contact settings than other internal categories, like case markers and tenses, which appear to be more resistant (Aikhenvald 2007, 26–27). At the same time, specific areas of the grammar can be particularly weak because of internal variation (Palacios 2013), as we will see shortly.

As recently shown by Gómez Seibane (2014), some pragmatic and morphosyntactic features of oral Basque Spanish already appear in bilingual texts from

the 19th century. This is the case for the use of (i) the *soler* + infinitive periphrasis with modal meaning, (ii) the *ya* adverb to emphasise a sentence affirmatively, (iii) the null objects, and (iv) the dative *le*/*s* for female direct objects. Furthermore, it is also demonstrated that in 19th century Basque Spanish there is a tendency to use a relatively freer constituent order due to the Basque OV pattern (Gómez Seibane 2015).

This paper pays attention to three (morpho)syntactic phenomena in Basque Spanish: null objects, *le*/*s* for female direct objects, and OV pattern. This study follows the methodology proposed by Poplack/Levey (2010, 398), whereby a contact-induced change "is present in the presumed variety and either 1) absent in the pre-contact or non-contact variety, or 2) if present [. . .] is not conditioned in the same way as in the source, and 3) can also be shown to parallel in some non-trivial way the behaviour of a counterpart feature in the source". The objectives of this paper are therefore (i) to empirically analyse the productivity of these phenomena in bilingual texts from the 18th and 19th centuries, and compare these findings with those from monolingual texts from the same period; (ii) to prove through empirical data that these structures are absent (or at times extremely limited) in non-contact Spanish varieties; (iii) to demonstrate that these phenomena belong to areas of the Spanish grammar that show internal variation and/or instability; and (iv) to show that these linguistic features have an equivalent in Basque. In view of all the above, it will be concluded that these phenomena are indirect contact-induced changes, which have arisen as a result of linguistic convergence.

3 Corpus, empirical data and methodology

3.1 Bilingual and monolingual corpus: private letters

The data collected come from private letters from a historical family archive, published partially by Zavala (2008). These originate from a rural area of Gipuzkoa, one of the southern Basque territories most resistant to shifting away from the minority language. The selected letters were written by three farm managers from one family: in 203 letters, dated between 1804 and 1882, these farmers inform their lords on aspects related to the organisation of the house, shopping, service to guests, and the news in the local town. Although the letters indicate a certain degree of familiarity towards the people they work for, the letter-writers also employ formal greetings, farewell and dating conventions and display good calligraphy, revealing a high literacy rate in Spanish. The language of the letters

is the local variety, Basque Spanish, as described in Camus Bergareche/Gómez Seibane (2012), which includes the use of the adverb *ya* as an affirmative particle (4a), the indicative conditional (*estaría*) instead of subjunctive imperfect tense (*estaba*/*estuviera*) (4b), and code-switching (4c), among other features.[4] The writers appear to be stable Basque-Spanish bilinguals.[5]

(4) a. *Ha hecho* *una huerta* *muy hermosa*
Have.3SG done.PART a vegetable-garden very beautiful
ya *le* *gustará* *[a] usted*.
already CL will-like.2SG [to] you
'He has grown a very beautiful vegetable garden. You will like it' (E 1825).

b. *No me ocurrió* *que* ***estaría***
no CL thought.1SG that would-be.3SG
en el cesto.
in the basket
'I did not think that it would be in the basket' (E n.d.).

c. *Para que proben* *morcillas* *de nuestro serdo*
so that taste.3PL black pudding of our pigs
ederrac egon biar dute
superb be must AUX.3PL
'So that they taste black pudding of our pigs. It should be superb' (AM 1881).

Consequently, these texts written by non-professional writers present various oral features ("language of immediacy") and are an ideal source for observing the history of Spanish linguistic varieties (Elspass 2012, 160–161). To compare the data of this bilingual corpus, a control corpus with the same text typology was used: to wit, personal letters sent in the 18th and 19th centuries with a similar "register",[6]

4 The orthographic confusion of sibilant fricative sounds (*serdos* instead of *cerdos*) and the absence of diphthongisation (*proben* instead of *prueben*) in (4c) are also features of Basque Spanish.

5 In examples from the bilingual corpus, I will mark the authorship of the letter (Ana J. Echavarri = E, Manuel A. Machain = M, and Atanasio Mugica = AM), followed by its date. For the control corpus, I will add the bibliographical reference, followed by the number of the letter and its date. For ease of reading, the orthography and punctuation have been modernised to a certain degree.

6 Following Biber/Conrad (2001, 175), "we use the label register as a cover term for any variety associated with a particular configuration of situational characteristics and purposes. Thus, registers are defined in nonlinguistic terms."

but written by Spanish monolinguals.[7] Most of these letters were sent from Latin America to Spain, specifically, to the cities or towns where these migrant writers' native relatives lived, such as Cádiz, Málaga, Madrid, Salamanca, Burgos, Avilés or Santander (Pérez Murillo 1999; Martínez 2007). The remaining letters were sent to Latin America by relatives who lived in the Canary Islands (Arbelo García 2012) or in monolingual areas of the Iberian Peninsula (Martínez 2007).

3.2 Empirical data and methodology

As mentioned in the introduction, for the present study I empirically analyse the productivity and the linguistic characterisation of null objects, *leísmo* and the OV pattern, using qualitative and quantitative data from two corpora. For the first phenomenon, I will take into account the variation between null and pronominal objects referring to a definite direct object. Consider the examples below. In (5), the referent is introduced in the preceding clause, and in the next clause the pronoun can be omitted (Ø) (5a) or overtly realised (5b). It should also be noted that propositional antecedents as in (5a) will also be included in the analysis. Examples (6a) and (6b) are left-dislocated direct objects,[8] possible in main and subordinate clauses: the former expresses an overt pronoun, and the latter contains a null object.[9] On the contrary, mass nouns and

7 Although letters from different monolingual dialectal areas were analysed, I grouped the results into a single set of data for each phenomenon, as no significant differences were found between the letters. For §4 and §5 I used letters 93–120 from Arbelo García (2012); and letters 99–101, 103–105, 108–109, 111–120, 131, 133–134, 137, 139, 140, 142–145, 153–154, 165, 172–175, 177, 179, 180–187, 189, 190, 192, 194–199, 203–204, 207, 226–227, 231–243, 252–253, 257, 258, 260–263, 273–276 from Martínez (2007). In addition to these letters, for §6, I also used letters 1–2, 5, 7, 9–41, 43–46, 48–54, 59, 64–68, 70–78, 80–92 from Pérez Murillo (1999); and from Zavala (2008), I selected letters between 1830 and 1855, sent by lawyers from non-contact areas (Madrid, Burgos and Valladolid) and by family members resident in Madrid. As concerns the authorship of these letters, whereas in asymmetrical written communication (e.g. formal letters) people tended to hire professional writers, since the 19th century an increasing number of (literate) people were able to write texts for personal needs in symmetrical and familiarity communicative settings (Elspass 2012).

8 These are direct objects that appear at the beginning of the clause, in clause-internal position, and with a co-referential clitic.

9 Although Bouzouita (2014) has observed that the syntactic properties of Left Dislocation constructions show a progressive grammaticalisation process from Old Spanish onwards, there is a lack of empirical data for the 18th and 19th centuries. Therefore, data from the control corpus will also allow us to elucidate the frequency of use of the co-referential direct object clitic with left-dislocated direct objects in monolingual varieties of Spanish.

bare noun referents (7) will be excluded as their pronominalisation is optional (see also §4).[10] Furthermore, semantic features of the referents, namely animacy, number and gender, have been taken into consideration.

(5) a. *Le dije que si traían alguna tramoya*
CL told.1SG that if brought.3PL some stage machinery
que me ***Ø*** *dijeran pronto*.
that CL NCL told.3PL soon
'I told him to tell me soon if they brought some stage machinery' (E 1838).
b. *Me han traído una niña para que* ***la*** *vea*.
CL have.3PL brought.PART a girl so that CL see1.PL
'They have brought me a girl so that I see her' (E 1838).

(6) a. *Porque los cuatro dientes de arriba*$_i$ ***los***$_i$ *tiene rotos*.
Because the four teeth of top CL have.3PL broken.PART
'Because the four upper teeth are broken' (E 1831).
b. *La minuta*$_i$ *no me* ***Ø***$_i$ *ha mandado*
the bill no CL NCL has.3SG sent.PART
hasta este mediodía.
until this noon
'The bill hasn't been sent to me until noon' (AM 1880).

(7) *Me enviase vm. harina [. . .] aquí me (****la****)*
CL sent.3SG you flour here CL CL
traen muy negra.
bring.3PL very black
'To send me flour here. They bring it to me very black' (E 1832).

As for *leísmo*, the use of the dative *le/s* forms substituting the accusative *lo(s)/la(s)* when referring to direct objects, I extracted both masculine and feminine referents, human and (in)animate ones, with a direct object function. Syntactically, I considered the following contexts: (i) when the referent is mentioned in the previous discourse and needs to be pronominalised (8a), and (ii) cases in which the clitic is co-referential with either a noun or a prepositional phrase, both preverbally (8b) and postverbally (8c). In all these contexts, the distribution between accusative and dative pronouns is studied. Observe, nevertheless,

10 In (7a) the optionality of the pronoun is indicated using parentheses.

that the following cases will be excluded: (i) causative structures with *hacer* and *dejar*, influence (*enseñar*) or perception (*ver*, *oír*) verbs followed by an infinitive (9a), and (ii) when an adjective phrase refers to an object (9b), considering that both contexts show variation in the pronoun-case choice (Fernández-Ordóñez 1999, 1325–1328). Animacy, number, gender, and (in)formal address are the semantic features that have been incorporated into the present analysis. Further a variety of syntactic contexts (left-dislocated direct objects, dative clitics or infinitive constructions) has also been analysed.

(8) a. *La niña [. . .] está bien; siempre* ***la*** *tienen*
the baby is well always CL hold.3PL
en brazos.
in arms
'The baby is well. They are always holding her' (AM 1880).
b. *A Federico*$_i$ ***le***$_i$ *he entrado en dos rifas*.
ACC Federico CL have.1SG gotten.PART into two raffles
'Federico, I have gotten him into two raffles' (E 1839).
c. ***Le***$_i$ *encontré a Echeverria*$_i$.
CL met.1SG ACC Echeverria
'I met Echeverria' (AM 1878).

(9) a. *Al hortelano Prudencio*$_i$, *igualmente* ***le***$_i$ *han*
ACC gardener Prudencio also CL have.3PL
hecho desocupar su habitación.
done.PART vacate-INF his room
'Gardener Prudencio has been forced to leave his room' (M 1834).
b. *En sus oraciones* ***la*** *tendrá presente*.
in his prayers CL will-keep.3SG mind
'He will keep her in his prayers' (E 1838).

As for the study of the variation in word order, verb-object (VO) and object-verb (OV), the following decisions were made: (i) declarative main sentences with lexical direct objects and subjects, and adverbs or adverbial phrases without finite verbs will be collected; (ii) as concerns the number of preverbal constituents, object clitic elements will not be counted as constituents as they are syntactically dependent on the verb (Sportiche 1998); and (iii) causative structures with a main verb of causation, influence or perception followed by an infinitive, as in (9a), will be excluded.

Finally, the quantitative data were subjected to the chi-square tests using a significance level of 0.05 (IBM SPSS Statistics 22.0). These tests measure how

likely an observed distribution is due to chance. When appropriate, as for Table 10, I used Fisher's Exact Test.

4 Null objects or the omission of the accusative clitic

In Standard Spanish, the variation between the presence and absence of a pronoun referring to a direct object is explained in terms of the Animacy and Definiteness hierarchies, as illustrated in Table 2).

Table 2: Animacy and Definiteness hierarchies (Aissen 2003, 437).

a. Animacy → Human > Animate > Inanimate
b. Definiteness → Tonic Pronoun > Proper Name > Definite Noun Phrase (NP) > Indefinite Specific NP > Indefinite Non-specific NP

If the referent is a tonic pronoun (10a), a proper name (10b) or a specific definite (10c) or indefinite NP (10d), the pronoun is obligatory. In contrast, with indefinite non-specific NPs, bare nouns (11a–b) and mass nouns (11d) included, two options emerge as the presence of the accusative clitic is optional (Leonetti 2011).

(10) a. *Solo* ***la***$_i$ *quiero* *a ella*$_i$.
only CL love.1SG ACC her
'I only love her.'

b. *Vio* *a Juan* *en la calle* *pero no* ***lo*** *saludó.*
saw.3SG ACC John on the street but no CL greeted.3SG
'He saw John on the street but did not greet him.'

c. *El libro* *está* *en casa. Cóge****lo****.*
the book is.3SG at home take.2SG-CL
'The book is at home. Take it.'

d. *Compré* *un coche. Me gustaría que* ***lo*** *vieras.*
bought.1SG a car CL like.1SG that CL see.2SG 'I bought a car. I would like you to see it.'

(11) a. *¿Compró <u>entradas</u> para la próxima sesión?*
bought.3SG tickets for the next session
*No (**las**) compró/(**Las**) compró.*
no CL bought.3SG/CL bought.3SG
'Did he buy tickets for the next session? No, he did not/Yes, he did.'
b. *¿Hay <u>espectadores</u> para la próxima sesión?*
be.3SG spectators for the next session
*No (**los**) hay/(**Los**) hay.*
no CL be.3SG/CL be.3SG
'Are there any spectators for the next session? No, there are not/Yes, there are.'
c. *Él llevó <u>dinero</u> pero yo no (**lo**) llevé.*
he brought.3SG money but I no CL brought.1SG
'He brought money, but I did not.'

Interestingly, the omission of direct object pronouns beyond the contexts in (11) is not only a feature of Basque Spanish, but also of other language contact scenarios, such as Spanish in contact with the Amerindian languages (Palacios 2013). Indeed, in Basque Spanish bilingual and monolingual speakers may omit clitics referring to definite inanimate NPs,[11] particularly when occurring with left-dislocated constituents (12a), in sentences with dative clitics (12b), and in infinitive constructions (12c). Besides, null objects have been attested with human and animate referents (12d), mostly in events in which they do not actively participate, for example with infinitive constructions, imperfective tenses, and stative and perception verbs such as *have* (*tener*), *see* (*ver*) and *meet* (*conocer*) (Landa 1995).

(12) a. *<u>La maratón de San Sebastián</u>$_i$ **Ø$_i$** hice en tres minutos.*
the Marathon of San Sebastian NCL run.1SG in three minutes
'The San Sebastian Marathon, I run in three minutes' (Camus Bergareche/Gómez Seibane 2015, 221).

11 However, differences in frequency of use have been perceived depending on the area of the Basque Country and the register used. The frequency of null objects increases considerably in areas where there is a higher degree of use and stability of the Basque language. Likewise, register crucially determines the frequency of clitic omission for non-human accusatives: the higher the degree of formality, the lower the clitic omission frequency. Therefore, this suggests a high degree of linguistic awareness of the phenomenon, which can probably be considered as a marker of cultural identity (Camus Bergareche/Gómez Seibane 2015).

b. *No sé si me habéis visto el gorro,*
no know.1SG if CL have.2PL seen.PART my cap
ya me Ø habéis visto, ¿no?
already CL NCL have.2PL seen.PART no
'I do not know if you have seen my cap. You have already seen it, haven't you?' (Camus Bergareche/Gómez Seibane 2015, 221).

c. *Bueno, vamos a retirarØ*
well go.1PL to remove-INF-NCL
[la comida].
[the food]
'Well, let's remove it' (Camus Bergareche/Gómez Seibane, 2015, 221).

d. *No le conozco a la novia de Txetxu.*
no CL know.1SG ACC the girlfriend of Txetxu.
¿Tú Ø conoces?
you NCL know.2SG
'I do not know Txetxu's girlfriend. Do you know her?' (Landa 1995, 129).

It seems that the use of null objects depends on the semantic properties of the referents, and, to a lesser extent, on the syntactic constructions in which they appear. Some variationist research has revealed that animacy and number are the strongest constraints in the variation between null and overt pronouns: inanimate and plural referents increase the probability of use of null objects, while definiteness and specificity do not predict the presence or absence of the clitics, although they might interact with other linguistic constraints (Sainzmaza-Lecanda 2014a; 2014b). Syntactic factors that need to be considered in the use of null objects are left-dislocated direct objects and clauses in which dative clitics are present (Sainzmaza-Lecanda 2014b).

582 possible cases of null objects were analysed for the bilingual corpus, and 529 for the control corpus. Quantitatively, null objects represent 30% (175/582) of all contexts in the bilingual corpus, while for the control monolingual corpus null objects only constitute 1.5% (8/529) of all contexts. This difference is striking and, therefore, the comparison between these two corpora proves that null objects are much more frequent among bilingual speakers, as shown in Table 3.[12] Moreover, this difference in use between the bilingual and monolingual corpus is highly statistically significant.

12 In oral data, null objects account for 60% in Basque Spanish and only 5.6% in Castilian Spanish (Sainzmaza-Lecanda 2014b).

Table 3: Frequencies of direct object pronouns and null objects.

Corpus	Direct object pronouns	Null objects
Bilingual	70% (407/582)	30% (175/582)
Control	98.5% (521/529)	1.5% (8/529)

$\chi^2 = 164.249$; $p < 0.001$

As can be seen in Table 4, the vast majority of all null objects in the bilingual corpus (93.7%, 164/175) are inanimate entities, while human referents (4.5%, 8/175) and animate antecedents (1.7%, 3/175) show similar low rates of use. The few cases of omission in the monolingual corpus are all related to inanimate referents. As can be seen from Table 4, the differences between the bilingual and monolingual corpus are apparent, despite the low number of cases for the latter. However, it should also be pointed out that neither gender nor number appear to be relevant categories in the omission of clitics (in both cases, the differences were not statistically significant).

Table 4: Frequency and semantic properties of null objects' referents.

Corpus	Human	Animate	Inanimate
Bilingual	4.5% (8/175)	1.7% (3/175)	93.7% (164/175)
Control	0% (0/8)	0% (0/8)	100% (8/8)

As concerns the syntactic properties of null objects, displayed in Table 5, in the bilingual corpus 50.3% (88/175) of the null objects occur with left-dislocated direct objects (13a). In 11.4% (20/175) of object clitic omissions, there is a dative clitic in the clause (13b), and in 8% (14/175) of the cases, null objects appear in infinitive constructions (13c).[13] Finally, null objects with the referent in the previous clause make up 30.3% (53/175) of the examples of the omission cases (13d). Turning now to the monolingual corpus, null objects occur exclusively within left-dislocated constructions (13e). The data clearly demonstrate that there is a significant difference between the bilingual and the monolingual corpus as regards the null objects and their syntactic contexts.

13 When a null object appears in a sentence with a complex syntactic context, for example, with a left-dislocated construction and dative clitic, I count it as a single case and compute at the syntactic factor with fewer occurrences.

Table 5: Frequency and syntactic contexts of null objects.

Corpus	Left-dislocated direct object	Dative clitics	Infinitive constructions	Referent in previous clause
Bilingual	50.3% (88/175)	11.4% (20/175)	8% (14/175)	30.3% (53/175)
Control	100% (8/8)	0% (0/8)	0% (0/8)	0% (0/8)

(13) a. *Le dice que el expediente de la casa de la calle de los*
CL tells.SG that the file of the house of the street of the
Herreros$_i$ ***Ø***$_i$ *ha entregado a abogado*.
Herreros NCL has.3SG handed-in.PART to lawyer
'He tells him that the file of the house on Herreros street, he has given it to a lawyer' (AM 1878).

b. *[T]enía mal puesto el hueso y*
had.3SG badly placed the bone and
el sábado ***le Ø*** *puso Petriquillo*.
the Saturday CL NCL placed.3SG Petriquillo
'He had his bone displaced and Petriquillo placed it back for him on Saturday' (E 1825).

c. *[H]e recibido el adjunto real decreto y [. . .] por*
have.1SG received.PART the attached Royal Decree and to
enviar ***Ø*** *cuanto antes,* ***lo*** *envió por el correo*.
send-INF NCL more soon CL sent.3SG by the mail
'I have received the attached Royal Decree, and in order to send it as soon as possible, he sent it by mail' (E 1839).

d. *[R]ecibí la apreciable de usted y ayer domingo*
received.1SG the significant of you and yesterday Sunday
Ø *entregué en propias manos a don Sarasola*.
NCL delivered.1SG in own hands to mister Sarasola
'I received your significant letter and delivered it to mister Sarasola on Sunday' (M 1839).

e. *[L]os cuatro restantes* ***Ø*** *tengo*
the four remaining NCL have.1SG
también percibidos.
also received.PART
'The remaining four, I have also received them' (Martínez 2007, 408, 1733).

Summarising, the data reveal higher frequency of null objects in the bilingual corpus, with syntactic and semantic properties quite similar to the contemporary Basque Spanish uses (Gómez Seibane 2012a). Null objects mostly refer to inanimate referents, occasionally to human and animate referents, as shown in Table 4, and often occur with left-dislocated direct objects, in clauses with dative clitics, and in infinitive constructions[14], among others, as seen in Table 5.

In view of these findings, it appears that null objects in Basque Spanish could have emerged as the result of internal factors related to Animacy and Definiteness constraints,[15] and external factors, such as language contact. Regarding the former, null objects appear to display interdialectal variation in Spanish. As seen at Table 2, the likelihood of accusative clitic omission in Basque Spanish follows the trajectory of the well-known Animacy hierarchy, from inanimate to human referents in a process which is not yet completed (Gómez Seibane 2012a). Following this line of reasoning, it can be hypothesised that null objects in this contact scenario may follow the Definiteness hierarchy from indefinite non-specific NPs (also possible in Standard Spanish) to definite NPs, an issue for further research.

In my view, an external factor triggers the semantic differences in the use of null objects: to wit, the intense contact with the Basque language. As already pointed out by Landa (1995, 188–219), the following characteristics of Basque may have triggered the disappearance of almost all restrictions for null objects. Firstly, Basque is an agglutinative language that lacks a pronominal system similar to Spanish, and in which the auxiliary verb agrees with ergative, absolutive (if any) and dative arguments (if any) (Trask 1997, 103–109). Consider example (14).

(14) *Zuk* *sagarra* *erosi* *duzu*
You.ERG apple.ABS buy AUX.2SG
eta nik *eskolara* *Ø* *ekarri dut*.
and I.ERG school it.ABS bring AUX.1SG
'You have bought an apple and I have brought it to school.'

14 Following Gómez Seibane (2012a, 205–206), in Basque Spanish oral speech, null objects (i) mainly refer to inanimate referents (96.2%, 104/108), (ii) appear in negative sentences (50.1%, 54/108), (iii) have the referent in a previous clause (29.6%, 32/108), (iv) appear in infinitive constructions (21.2%, 23/108), (v) co-occur with left-dislocated direct objects (12.9%, 14/108), and (vi) appear in clauses with dative clitics (7.4%, 8/108).

15 These factors are also decisive with regard to other phenomena such as differential object marking (Laca 2006) and clitic doubling (Gómez Seibane 2012a).

As can be seen, the finite auxiliaries (*duzu*/*dut*) provide information about the arguments subcategorised by these verbs, that is, ergative and absolutive (Trask 1997, 218–234). The morphemes *-zu* or *-t* specify the person and number of the subject, ergative 2nd person singular and ergative 1st person singular respectively; verbal morpheme *d-* encodes the absolutive (*sagarra*). Note that in the second clause the absolutive (*sagarra*) appears only in the form of verbal morpheme *d-*.

Considering this, I conclude that a process of linguistic convergence took place. As pointed out by Landa/Franco (1996), bilingual speakers draw parallels between the Basque construction, which encodes the direct object in the verb, and the Spanish possibility of omitting 3rd person direct object clitics which refer to indefinite non-specific NPs. This structural similarity appears to have facilitated the loss of semantic restrictions of null objects in Basque Spanish, resulting in the acceptance of null objects with definite referents and, in some contexts, human and animate NPs. In other words, a generalisation and broadening of contexts of use took place due to convergence, resulting in more internal variation. This most likely occurred before the 19th century.

5 *Le*/*s* for female referents in the accusative

The phenomenon known as *leísmo* entails the neutralisation of case and gender parameters in the unstressed 3rd person pronominal system.[16] Although it is a very common phenomenon in the history of the Spanish language, it tends to occur with masculine referents more often than with feminine ones (Gómez Seibane 2013a, 38–44). *Leísmo* is also one of the features of the so-called 'Basque pronominal system', observed among both bilingual and monolingual Spanish speakers in northern Basque Country and northern Navarre (Fernández-Ordóñez 1999). However, in contrast to other varieties of Spanish, *leísmo* in the 'Basque pronominal system' spreads to animate referents regardless of their gender, be they masculine or feminine.

It has been argued that both internal and external factors are responsible for the origin of *leísmo* (see a summary in Gómez Seibane 2013b). As for internal factors, the traditional hypothesis (Lapesa 1968) posited a distinction between animate (referred to by *le*) and inanimate ones (referred to by *lo*/*a*). This trend partially correlates with gender distinctions, as *le* is used for masculine, *la* for

16 For a synchronic study on *leísmo*, see Camus Bergareche/Gómez Seibane (in this volume).

feminine and *lo* for neuter forms, like in other paradigms, such as tonic pronouns (*él*, *ella*, *ello*) and demonstratives ones (*este*, *esta*, *esto*). Another semantic-pragmatic hypothesis (García 1975) views the variation between *le* and *lo* as the result of communication strategies that provide different degrees of participant activity in the event. According to this explanation, accusatives expressed by *le* are perceived as more active entities than others referred to via *lo*/*a*. Nevertheless, this hypothesis lacks explanatory power as the close relation between *le* and animate male referents, the lower diffusion of *le* for female entities and the usage of *le* targeting masculine inanimate entities remains unexplained.

Considering that *leísmo* is not an evolutionary trend in Romance languages, the third hypothesis proposes that language contact is the external trigger for this variation in the unstressed 3rd person pronominal system (Fernández-Ordóñez 2001, 428–430): it states that, in Basque and Spanish bilingual areas, *le*/*s*, prototypically animate as an indirect object and without gender marking, is the pronoun used to refer to animate entities, both male and female, due to the lack of gender markers in Basque. In this regard, the use of *le*/*s* for animate objects in this variety is a well-identified universal trend following which inflectional morphology is associated with prototypical arguments. This explanation would predict that, since dative clitics are usually linked to animate entities, they spread to all animate referents, including direct objects (Fernández-Ordóñez 2001).

From a historical perspective, the use of *le* instead of *lo*/*a* for masculine and feminine referents is well documented in Basque Spanish since the 16th century (Gómez Seibane 2013a): *le* could be selected in legal texts mainly for male referents, but also female ones. This tendency increased in the 17th century. In the following century, this situation expanded to other textual domains such as personal letters.[17] The use of *le* is also documented in the bilingual corpus of letters, as we will see shortly.

I found that bilingual and monolingual speakers selected accusative clitics for animate and non-human entities in the few attested cases (8/8); for inanimate referents, they were also preferred in almost all cases (bilinguals, 162/163 and monolinguals, 219/224). For human entities, I checked 81 clauses with male accusative referents expressed by a pronoun, and 79 with female accusative referents in the bilingual corpus. In the control corpus, there were 98 pronouns referring to male accusative entities, and 41 for female entities with the same function. The frequency of *leísmo* (i.e. the use of dative clitics) vs. the use of

17 In the 17th century *le* was used for female entities in the accusative with a frequency of 7.2% (4/55) (Gómez Seibane 2010). During the 18th century, the use of *le* instead of *la* in singular increased to 43% (9/21). However, caution is advised due to the limited number of occurrences (Gómez Seibane 2004).

accusative clitics referring to human entities with direct object function is shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Frequency of *le/s*, *la/s*, *lo/s* for human direct object NPs.

Corpus	Human referents	Dative clitics (*Le/s*)	Accusative clitics (*Lo/s – La/s*)
Bilingual	Male	76.5% (62/81)	23.5% (19/81)
	Female	24.1% (19/79)	75.9% (60/79)
Control	Male	31.6% (31/98)	68.4% (67/98)
	Female	4.9% (2/41)	95.1% (39/41)

Focusing now on direct object NPs with human referents, as Table 6 shows, bilinguals prefer dative clitics for male entities (76.5%, 62/81 *le/s* vs. 23.5%, 19/81 *lo/s*), but for female ones the accusative *la/s* is more common than the dative *le/s* (75.9%, 60/79 *la/s* vs. 24.1%, 19/79 *le/s*), although the dative pronoun still occurs in one in four cases, as is illustrated in (15). Among monolinguals, accusative clitics *lo/s* are selected for male entities in 68.4% (67/98) of all cases (vs. 31.6%, 31/98 with dative *le/s*), and for female referents in 95.1% (39/41) of all examples.[18] The data reveal that gender is statistically significant in the selection of the type of clitic, both for the bilingual corpus ($\chi^2 = 44.088$; $p = 0$) and

18 In (i), there may be a structural priming effect (*le tenia*), while in (ii) *les* referred to the wife and sisters may be a formulaic expression or routinised sequence for farewell. It should be pointed out that in this letter the writer uses the familiar form of address (*tu esposo*).

(i) *[a tu hermana] el mucho amor que le tenía*
[ACC your sister] the great love that CL had.1SG
y ***le*** *quería*.
and CL loved.1SG
'The great love I had for her and I loved her' (Arbelo García 2012, 352, 1773).

(ii) *[esposa e hijas] De tu esposo que más*
[wife and sisters] From your husband who more
*desea ver****les***.
desire.3SG see.INF-CL
'From your husband who is looking forward to seeing you' (Arbelo García 2012, 382, 1812).

the control corpus (χ^2 = 11.429; p = 0.0007). The differences between the two corpora are also statistically significant for the male referents (χ^2 = 35.833; p < 0.001) as well as the female ones (χ^2 = 6.872; p = 0.009).

(15) a. ***Le$_i$*** *he tomado* *a Josepa$_i$*.
CL have.1SG hired.PART ACC Josepa
'I have hired Josepa' (E 1838).
b. *La Brígida$_i$ no* ***le$_i$*** *encontré en casa*.
the Brígida no CL met.3SG in home
'Brígida, I did not meet her at home' (AM 1880).
c. *La otra [. . .]* ***le*** *tuvimos en San Sebastián*.
the other CL had.1PL in San Sebastian
'The other [. . .] we had her in San Sebastian' (M 1827).

At the same time, *leísmo* may be influenced in both corpora by the polite forms of address (Fernández-Ordóñez 1999), as is exemplified in (16). The common procedure for expressing politeness and respect was to refer indirectly to the interlocutor. Therefore, *usted/es*, the grammaticalised form of *vuestra merced* (De Jonge/Nieuwenhuijsen 2012, 253) and other polite forms of address, such as *Señor* 'Sir' and *Señora* 'Madam' are used with 3rd person pronouns (*se*, *le/s*, *la/s*, *lo/s*, among others) and with an agreeing verb (Lapesa 2000, 340–341).

(16) a. *Me dijo que toda la defensa fue para usted, como*
CL told.3SG that all the defense was.3G for you because
todos ***le$_i$*** *atacaban* *a usted$_i$*.
everyone CL attacked.3PL ACC you
'He told me that you were strongly protected, because everyone attacked you.' (AM 1878)
b. *Muy señora mía y de mi mayor aprecio: tomo*
Very madam mine and of my greater appreciation take.1SG
*la libertad de molestar****le*** *de nuevo*.
the liberty of disturb.INF-CL of again
'Dearest madam: I take the liberty to disturb you again' (M 1829).

For the polite forms of address, *le* is the preferred choice, as opposed to accusative pronouns *lo* and *la*, to refer to *usted*, which has been interpreted as a way of emphasising that the reference of the 3rd person pronoun *le* must be sought in the communicative situation (Fernández-Ordóñez 1999, 1340). Although this tendency, known as *leísmo de cortesía* 'politeness *leísmo*', as in (17), has been

explained as a procedure to disambiguate the formal 2nd person from the 3rd person, it has not yet been sufficiently investigated from a historical perspective.

(17) a. ***¿Le*** *llevo a casa? [a usted/*a él]*
CL take.1SG to home [ACC you/*ACC him]
'May I take you/*him home?'
b. ***¿Lo*** *llevo a casa? [a usted/a él]*
CL take.1SG to home [ACC you/ACC him]
'May I take you/him home?'

In order to verify the possible influence of referents in the selection of clitic pronouns, I compared the frequency of accusative and dative pronouns referring to 3rd and formal 2nd person referents (*usted*, *señor*, *señora*), as seen in Table 7. The data show that the difference between the use of the dative or accusative pronouns and their referents is statistically significant for both corpora (bilingual corpus: $\chi^2 = 5.257$; $p = 0.022$; and control one: $\chi^2 = 7.426$; $p = 0.006$). The relative frequencies show that in the control corpus the dative clitic is more frequent for polite forms of address with 2nd person referents than in the bilingual one (60.6%, 20/33 vs. 27.2%, 22/81).

Table 7: Frequency of *le/s*, *la/s*, *lo/s* for human direct object NPs.

Corpus	Dative clitics		Accusative clitics	
	3rd person	2nd person (FA)	3rd person	2nd person (FA)
Biling.	72.8% (59/81)	27.2% (22/81)	87.3% (69/79)	12.7% (10/79)
Contr.	39.4% (13/33)	60.6% (20/33)	66% (70/106)	34% (36/106)

In sum, *leísmo* is much more frequent in the bilingual corpus than in the monolingual corpus, both for masculine and feminine human referents. In my view, the findings can be interpreted as an indirect contact-induced change in which both internal and external factors are crucial for its formation. When it comes to internal factors, it has been shown that the intrinsic evolutionary tendency of Spanish cancels the case parameter in the 3rd person pronominal system, which favours the dative case above the accusative, but only (or mainly) in the case of masculine referents. Gender agreement is better maintained in the feminine than in the masculine, akin to the evolutionary trends in Spanish (Fernández-Ordóñez

2001). It should be noted that gender and number are inherent qualities of nouns in Spanish and, consequently, these constitute internal and stable categories. Nevertheless, the masculine is less marked than the feminine at the morphological level (as in other Romance languages): for instance, masculine is the unmarked gender choice to refer jointly to masculine and feminine entities. Therefore, in Spanish, gender is a stable category, and feminine agreement must be particularly preserved, due to its morphologically marked status (Fernández-Ordóñez 2001, 436–442).

However, the Basque Spanish variety goes beyond these boundaries, since it extends the usage of *le*/*s* to both masculine and feminine human referents, because gender is not grammatically relevant in the Basque language. According to Trask (1997, 118, 255), Basque has no grammatical gender and, as a result, gender-marking of nouns is usually done lexically (*gizon* 'man' and *emakume* 'woman'), and very occasionally done by an adapted morpheme from Romance. Therefore, at least since the 19th century, it appears that bilingual speakers have partially restructured and simplified the Spanish unstressed 3rd person pronominal system through linguistic convergence. In the resulting system, animacy prevails over case (as in non-contact Spanish varieties), even for female referents, because gender is not relevant in the complex repertoire of forms and structures that bilingual speakers share in both languages (Matras 2009). In brief, we can conclude that the observed variation in this Spanish pronominal system has been reanalysed through exposure to Basque.

6 Word order: Spanish VO vs. Basque OV

Although word order in Spanish is relatively free, focus tends to appear after the verb (SVO) in declarative sentences within the matrix domain (18). Changes in word order are the result of information packaging and can occur at the left or right periphery of a clause. Left peripheral constituents may constitute cases of topicalisation or focalisation, containing topics and foci, usually associated in the literature with given and new information[19] respectively (Prince 1981; Zubizarreta 1999).

(18) *Luis vio a su madre*. (SVO)
Luis see.3SG ACC his mother
'Luis saw his mother.'

19 The literature usually links topic with given information, for a critique of this, see Bouzouita (2015) who shows that new information is also possible.

(19) *Koldok ama ikusi zuen*. (SOV)
Koldo.ERG mother.ABS see AUX.3SG
'Koldo saw his mother.'

In contrast to Spanish, the unmarked word order configuration in Basque is SOV, as shown in (19), and focus is positioned immediately before the verb (Ortiz de Urbina 2003; Trask 1997, 109–110). Other structural patterns are also possible (SVO, OVS and OSV), but Erdocia/Laka/Rodríguez-Fornells (2012) demonstrated that SOV is the easiest to process, as the other patterns require more processing effort due to the extra syntactic operations involved.

Given the language contact scenario, one might hypothesise that Basque Spanish has increased the frequency of use of preverbal objects, and/or lost the discourse-pragmatic constraints of such objects. In fact, the order of clausal constituents and their pragmatic functions are highly diffusible cross-linguistically in contact scenarios (Aikhenvald 2007, 26–27). Nevertheless, Heine (2008) has demonstrated that contact does not always lead to a new word order in the influenced language: he suggests that "speakers recruit material available in R (the replica language) to create new structures on the model of M (the model language) and that, rather than being entirely new, the structures created in R are built on existing use patterns and constructions that are already available in R" (Heine 2008, 57). Thus, as Matras (2009, 4–5) points out, in language contact scenarios communication is the result of two primary pressures: loyalty to context-appropriate constructions and exploitation of the full expressive potential of linguistic structures.

As regards the interaction between information structure and word order among Basque-Spanish bilinguals, a previous study showed that bilinguals express new information in preverbal position more often than Spanish monolinguals, in addition to using fewer instances of discourse-continuous topics (Gómez Seibane 2012b). In this section, firstly, the frequency of OV and VO constructions in the bilingual and monolingual corpora will be determined and, secondly, OV constructions will be characterised from the discourse-pragmatic perspective. The word order patterns in 458 main clauses were examined for the bilingual corpus, and 183 clauses for the monolingual one, as shown in Table 8. The data show a higher frequency of preverbal direct objects in the bilingual corpus (18.8%, 86/458) than in the monolingual one (9.8%, 18/183). Besides, the bilingual corpus presents similar rates of preverbal direct objects in all three writers, which suggests this feature to be specific to this variety (Gómez Seibane 2015). Regarding the control corpus, results agree with historical data: from the 13th to the 16th century, preverbal direct objects occurred between 6.6% (92/1390) and 7.7% (79/1015) of the time and they would increase later on (Danford 2002 cited by Bouzouita 2014). In

addition, there is a statistically significant difference between the corpora for the discussed word order patterns.

Table 8: Frequencies of preverbal and postverbal direct objects.

Corpus	OV	VO
Bilingual	18.8% (86/458)	81.2% (372/458)
Control	9.8% (18/183)	90.2% (165/183)

$\chi^2 = 7.691$; $p = 0.006$

Now that the frequencies of use of preverbal and postverbal objects have been explored, a fine-grained analysis aimed at checking whether preverbal objects maintain the same pragmatic functions and information-structural status in the two corpora will be undertaken. For this purpose, preverbal objects' behaviour will be analysed. Preverbal objects are usually described as given information and are commonly characterised as elements with discourse prominence (Prince 1981; Givón 1983);[20] for Spanish, following Silva-Corvalán (1984), we will use the term 'discourse link' (*enlace textual*).[21] In the bilingual corpus, preverbal objects appear to function primarily as discourse links (93%, 80/86), as exemplified in (20a).[22] The remaining preverbal objects (7%, 6/86) are mostly focalisations (20b), very often with (relatively) new information. In the monolingual corpus, preverbal objects are always discourse links (18/18).

(20) a. *La tienda$_i$ piensan ponerla$_i$ muy bien.*
the store plan.3PL put-INF-CL very well
'They are planning to put the store really well' (E 1842).

b. *Los anteojos me pidió Urrutia, el cura.*
the glasses CL asked.3SG Urrutia the priest
'The priest Urrutia asked me for the glasses' (E n.d.).

20 I assume the given-new information taxonomy proposed by Prince (1981): (i) given information, known by the hearer or mentioned in the discourse (*evocated*); (ii) information that can be deducted, based on the speaker's beliefs (*inferable*); and (iii) *new entities*, that are first introduced in the discourse. New entities must sometimes be created by the hearer (*brand-new*), or are *unused*, but already known. For discourse prominence, I employ *referential persistence* that looks at how often a referent is mentioned in the subsequent discourse (Givón 1981).

21 For Silva-Corvalán (1984), discourse links are preverbal objects with [-new, -contrastive] information.

22 Some of these discourse links have null objects (see §4).

Nevertheless, discourse links in the bilingual corpus are more frequently new or relatively new entities (58.8%, 47/80), as shown in Table 9. In the control group, on the contrary, discourse links contain mainly evocated or inferred information (66.6%, 12/18). Discourse links in the bilingual corpus are thus quite different with respect to the information-structural status of the referent. However, the difference between both corpora is not statistically significant.

Table 9: Given-new information in discourse links.

Corpus	Information	
	Given (Evocated/Inferred)	New (New/Unused)
Bilingual	41.2% (33/80)	58.8% (47/80)
Control	66.6% (12/18)	44.4% (6/18)

$\chi^2 = 3.822$; $p = 0.051$

As shown in the examples below, first-time mentioned entities are quite common in preverbal position within the bilingual corpus. In contrast, these newly mentioned entities are already known by the hearer, as in (21). In this example, the writer tells the reader who she met in the festivities of a city. The people she mentions in her letter are well known to the writer and the addressee, but had not been previously introduced, or were not inferable from information given earlier in discourse. In the monolingual corpus, however, preverbal direct objects present mainly given information, usually mentioned in prior discourse, as in (22).

(21) *A la señorita$_i$* ***la$_i$*** *vi ayer, pero de prisa [. . .] Doña*
ACC the miss CL saw.1SG yesterday but of hurry madam
Anita Colmenares y doña Joaquina$_i$ ***las$_i$*** *vi también*
Anita Colmenares and madam Joaquina CL saw.1SG also
y me preguntaron mucho de usted.
and CL asked.3PL more of you
'I saw the miss yesterday, but in a hurry. I also saw madam Anita Colmenares and madam Joaquina and they asked about you.' (E 1853)

(22) *El legado de 1.500 reales [. . .]* *Los 1500 reales míos*$_i$
the legacy of 1.500 reals the 1.500 reals mine
*quisiera dejárte****los***$_i$, *aunque tanto o más*
would-like.1SG leave.INF-CL-CL although much or more
que tú ***los*** *necesito*.
than you CL need.1SG
'The legacy of 1,500 reals [. . .] I would like to leave you my legacy of 1,500 reals, although I need them as much or even more than you do' (Martínez 2007, 260, 1795).

In relation to discourse prominence, I analysed the persistence of discourse links with new or relatively new information. This kind of information shows no topic continuity in the previous discourse, but commonly exhibits referential persistence in the following discourse (Hidalgo Downing 2003, 290). This is indeed the case in the monolingual corpus (see Table 10): almost all (83.3%) discourse links conveying (relatively) new information continue in the following discourse. However, preverbal entities continue in the following discourse only half of the time in the bilingual letters (51%). There is not a statistically significant difference between both corpora with respect to the referential persistence in discourse links with (relatively) new information, according to the result of the Fisher Exact Test (p = 0.204).

Table 10: Referential persistence in discourse links with (relatively) new information.

Corpus	Referential persistence	Referential discontinuity
Bilingual	51.1% (24/47)	48.9% (23/47)
Control	83.3% (5/6)	16.7% (1/6)

Examples such as (23)–(24) illustrate this difference: in (23) the preverbal object introduces a new discourse topic (*su esposa*), which is resumed in the following clauses through 3rd person verb forms – in small caps –, while the preverbal object in (24) is not explicitly mentioned or addressed by any linguistic element in the subsequent discourse.

(23) *Su esposa*$_i$ ***la***$_i$ *ha tenido bien achacosa y ya*
his wife CL has.3SG had.PART seriously ill and already
me dice QUEDABA *tomando unos sudores por el mal*
CL tells.2PL stayed.3SG having.GER some baths for the sick

de la cabeza que *PADECE*.
of the head that suffers.3SG
'His wife has been seriously sick, and he indeed tells me that she used to take baths for her headache.' (Arbelo García 2012, 354, 1773)

(24) *La contribución$_i$ me Ø$_i$ han bajado a 200*
the contribution CL NCL have.3PL lowered.PART to 200
reales pero con este otro estamos como antes (E 1839)
reals but with this other are.1PL as before
'The contribution has been lowered to 200 reals, but with this one we remain the same' (E 1839).

In short, the Basque Spanish word order has developed from the Spanish internal tendency towards a relatively free constituent order. Although, as Heine states (2008, 57), it can be difficult to prove that contact is a decisive factor for a specific innovation, the findings presented here appear to demonstrate that the Basque language is a triggering factor for the OV pattern in Basque Country Spanish: the Basque word order (SOV) and the preverbal focus position have increased the frequency of use of preverbal objects with (relatively) new information and lower referential persistence in Basque Spanish, against the trend observed for non-contact varieties of Spanish.

7 Conclusion

In sum, it is clear that null objects, *le*/*s* for female direct objects, and OV pattern in Basque Spanish are indirect contact-induced changes resulting from linguistic convergence.

- The productivity of three features of Basque Spanish as the currently spoken have been documented in an 18th and 19th century corpus of letters written by bilinguals.
- Data have proved that these phenomena are absent (or extremely limited) in non-contact Spanish varieties: in comparison with the monolingual corpus, the results reveal higher frequency of null objects, *leísmo* for male and female accusatives, and preverbal objects with (relatively) new information and lower referential persistence in the bilingual group.
- Regarding Spanish grammar, it has been shown that internal variation in some domains of grammar has facilitated the loss of semantic restrictions of null objects, the partial restructuring and simplification of the unstressed 3rd person

pronominal system, and the surge of an alternative word order pattern, due to exposure to the Basque language. I refer particularly to the variation regarding the presence and absence of accusative pronouns referring to an indefinite non-specific NP, to the variation between *le*/*s* and *lo*/*s* for male direct objects, and to the internal tendency towards a relatively free constituent order. Bilingual speakers have taken advantage of the variation in these areas of Spanish grammar to apply their mental organisation procedures, complying with context-appropriate constructions and exploiting the full expressive potential of linguistic structures.

– As regards the Basque language, it has been shown that some linguistic features of this language could have triggered the emergence of these phenomena. In Basque, auxiliary verbs encode agreement with ergative, absolutive (if any) and dative arguments (if any), which may have led to the increased proportion of null objects. As a result of the lack of grammatical gender in Basque, gender appears not to be a relevant category for bilingual speakers, allowing them to link the dative clitics *le*/*les* with all animate referents in general, including accusative ones. Finally, Basque preverbal focus placement may have increased the frequency of OV pattern with (relatively) new information and lower referential persistence, contrary to the behaviour observed for non-contact varieties of Spanish.

8 References

8.1 Primary text sources

Arbelo García, Adolfo I., *Correspondencia canario-americana. Familia y redes sociales*, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Idea, 2012.

Martínez, Mª del Carmen, *Desde la otra orilla. Cartas de Indias en el Archivo de la Real Chancillería de Valladolid (siglos XVI-XVIII)*, León, Universidad de León, 2007.

Pérez Murillo, Mª Dolores, *Cartas de emigrantes escritas desde Cuba*, Cádiz/Sevilla, Aconcagua Libros, 1999.

Zavala, Luis Mª (ed.), *Política y vida cotidiana*, Lasarte-Oria, Irargi, 3 DVD, 2008.8.2

8.2 Secondary literature

Aikhenvald, Alexandra Y., *Grammars in Contact. A Cross-linguistic Perspective*, in: Aikhenvald, Alexandra Y./Dixon, Robert M. W. (edd.), *Grammars in Contact. A Cross-linguistic Typology*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, 1–66.

Aissen, Judith, *Differential Object Marking. Iconicity vs. Economy*, Natural Language & Linguistic Theory 21 (2003), 435–483.

Biber, Douglas/Conrad, Susan, *Register variation. A corpus approach*, in: Schiffrin, Deborah/Tannen, Deborah/Hamilton, Heidi E. (edd.), *The handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Malden, Blackwell, 2001, 175–196.

Bouzouita, Miriam, *Left Dislocation Phenomena in Old Spanish. An Examination of their Structural Properties*, in: Dufter, Andreas/Octavio de Toledo, Álvaro S. (edd.), *Left Sentence Peripheries in Spanish. Diachronic, Variationist and Typological Perspectives*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 2014, 23–52.

Bouzouita, Miriam, *Las dislocaciones a la izquierda en el español del siglo XIII. La accesibilidad referencial*, In: López Izquierdo, Marta/Castillo Lluch, Mónica (edd.), *El orden de palabras en la historia del español y otras lenguas iberorromances*, Madrid, Visor, 2015, 235–278.

Camus, Bruno/Gómez Seibane, Sara, *Basque and Spanish in 19th century San Sebastián*, Ianua. Revista Philologica Romanica 10 (2010), 223–239.

Camus, Bruno/Gómez Seibane, Sara, *Introducción. El castellano del País Vasco*, in: Camus, Bruno/Gómez Seibane, Sara (edd.), *El castellano del País Vasco*, Bilbao, Universidad del País Vasco, 2012, 1–17.

Camus, Bruno/Gómez Seibane, Sara, *Nuevos datos acerca de la omisión de objetos en el castellano del País Vasco*, Círculo de Lingüística Aplicada a la Comunicación 61 (2015), 211–236.

Danford, Richard K., *Preverbal accusatives, pronominal reduplication and information packaging. A diachronic analysis of Spanish*, PhD dissertation, Ohio State University, 2002.

De Jonge, Bob/Nieuwenhuijsen, Dorien, *Form of address*, in: Hualde, José I./Olarrea, Antxon/ORourke, Erin (edd.), *The handbook of Hispanic linguistics*, London, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, 247–262.

Dávila, Paulí/Eizagirre, Ana/Fernández, Idoia, *Leer y escribir en las escuelas de Euskal Herria*, In: Dávila, Paulí (ed.), *Lengua, escuela y cultura. El proceso de alfabetización de Euskal Herria siglo XIX y XX*, Bilbao, Universidad del País Vasco, 1995, 45–78.

Elspass, Stephan, *The use of private letters and diaries in sociolinguistic investigation*, in: Hernández-Campoy, Juan M./Conde-Silvestre, Juan C. (edd.), *The handbook of historical sociolinguistics*, Chicester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, 156–169.

Erdocia, Kepa/Laka, Itziar/Rodríguez-Fornells, Antoni, *Processing verb medial word orders in a verb final language*, in: Swart, Peter/Lamers, Monique (edd.), *Case, word order, and prominence. Interacting cues in language production and comprehension*, Dordrecht, Springer, 2012, 217–238.

EUSTAT = Euskal Estatistika Erakundea/Instituto Vasco de Estadística, *Estadística de población y viviendas 2006*, 2008, www.eustat.eus [consulted: 22.08.2015].

Fernández-Ordóñez, Inés, *Leísmo, laísmo y loísmo*, in: Bosque, Ignacio/Demonte, Violeta (edd.), *Gramática descriptiva de la lengua española*, vol. 1, Madrid, Espasa-Calpe, 1999, 1317–1397.

Fernández-Ordóñez, Inés, *Hacia una dialectología histórica. Reflexiones sobre la historia del leísmo, el laísmo y el loísmo*, Boletín de la Real Academia Española 81 (2001), 389–464.

García, Erica, *The role of theory in linguistic analysis. The Spanish pronoun system*, Amsterdam, North Holland, 1975.

García-Miguel, José Mª, *Variable coding and object alignment in Spanish. A corpus-based approach*, Folia Linguistica 49:1 (2015), 205–246.
Givón, Talmy, *Topic continuity in discourse. An introduction*, in: Givón, Talmy (ed.), *Topic continuity in discourse. A quantitative cross-language study*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 1983, 1–42.
Gómez Seibane, Sara, *Uso de los pronombres átonos de tercera persona en guipuzcoanos emigrados a Indias en el siglo XVIII*, Res Diachronicae Vitual 3: Estudios sobre el siglo XVIII (2004), 39–51.
Gómez Seibane, Sara, *Neutro de materia y otros fenómenos del sistema pronominal átono en Bilbao (siglos XV-XVII)*, in: Gómez Seibane, Sara/Ramírez Luengo, José L. (edd.), *Maestra en mucho. Estudios filológicos en homenaje a la profesora Carmen Isasi Martínez*, Buenos Aires, Voces del Sur, 2010, 133–148.
Gómez Seibane, Sara, *La omisión y duplicación de objetos en el castellano del País Vasco*, in: Camus, Bruno/Gómez Seibane, Sara (edd.), *El castellano del País Vasco*, Bilbao, Universidad del País Vasco, 2012, 193–214 (= 2012a).
Gómez Seibane, Sara, *Contacto de lenguas y orden de palabras. OV/VO en el español del País Vasco*, Lingüística Española Actual 34:1 (2012), 115–135 (= 2012b).
Gómez Seibane, Sara, *Pronombres átonos (le, la, lo) en español. Aproximación histórica*, Madrid, Arco Libros, 2013 (= 2013a).
Gómez Seibane, Sara, El leísmo. *Principales hipótesis sobre su origen*, Español Actual 100 (2013), 137–146 (= 2013b).
Gómez Seibane, Sara, *Cambios indirectos inducidos por contacto en el castellano del País Vasco del siglo XIX*, in: Ramírez Luengo, José L./Velásquez Upegui, Eva P. (edd.), *La historia del español hoy. Estudios y perspectivas*, Lugo, Axac, 2014, 97–111.
Gómez Seibane, Sara, *El español en contacto con la lengua vasca. Orden de palabras y estructura informativa en diacronía*, in: López Izquierdo, Marta/Castillo Lluch, Mónica (edd.), *El orden de palabras en la historia del español y otras lenguas iberorromances*, Madrid, Visor, 2015, 457–482.
Heine, Bernd, *Contact-induced word order change without word order change*, in: Siemund, Peter/Kintana, Noemí (edd.), *Language contact and contact languages*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 2008, 33–60.
Hidalgo Downing, Raquel, *La tematización en el español hablado. Estudio discursivo sobre el español peninsular*, Madrid, Gredos, 2003.
Hualde, José I., *Introduction*, in: Hualde, José I./Ortiz de Urbina, Jon (edd.), A grammar of Basque, Berlin/New York, Mouton de Gruyter, 2003, 1–4.
Laca, Brenda, *El objeto directo. La marcación preposicional*, in: Company, Concepción (ed.), *Sintaxis histórica de la lengua española*, vol. 1, México, UNAM/Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2006, 423–478.
Landa, Alazne, *Conditions on null objects in Basque Spanish and their relation to leísmo and clitic doubling*, PhD dissertation, Los Angeles, University of Southern California, 1995.
Landa, Alazne/Franco, Jon, *Two issues in null objects in Basque Spanish. Morphological decoding and grammatical permeability*, in: Zagona, Karen (ed.), *Grammatical theory and Romance languages*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 1996, 159–168.
Lapesa, Rafael, *Sobre los orígenes y evolución del leísmo, laísmo y loísmo*, in: Baldinger, Kurt (ed.), *Festschrift Walther von Wartburg*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer, 1968, 523–551.