

TTIPI-TTAPA TTIPI-TTAPA... KORRIKA!!! MOTION AND SOUND SYMBOLISM IN BASQUE*

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Ttípi ttapa, ttípi ttapa...KORRIKA
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Fermin Muguruza. 'Big Beñat eta Korrika 2001'



Ibilaldia 2003, logo

Hinton, Nichols, and Ohala (1994: 1) define 'sound symbolism' as the "direct linkage between sound and meaning". Although in traditional linguistic theory (de Saussure 1916), this relation is assumed to be arbitrary, several studies in this field (Abelin 1999, Hamano 1998, Hinton *et al.* 1994, Nuckols 1996, Voeltz and Kilian-Hatz 2001a) have been successful in proving this assumption, if not completely wrong, not completely right. There is a non-arbitrary element in the way some meanings are linked to some sounds, as well as some sounds are linked to some meanings.

Furthermore, it seems that this phenomenon occurs in many languages around the world. The only difference in the 'universality' of sound symbolism might be one of degree; that is to say, some languages are more prone to sound symbolic formations than others. Basque is among the former. The sound symbolic system in this language is very rich and exceptionally important in some areas of the Basque lexicon; especially in those semantic fields related to small creatures (amphibians, reptiles, insects, bugs, crustaceans, birds and fish), types of activity, weather phenomena, noise-making instruments, physical characteristics, and sexual terms (Trask 1997: 259).

Despite its crucial importance, as Trask's points out (1997: 259), "sound symbolism in Basque is a topic which has so far received nothing like the attention it deserves". There are a few 'onomatopoeic lists' included in Azkue (1923-25) and Zamarripa (1987),¹ but there are no studies that systematically analyse the

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¹ We may include in this list two other studies Aurkenerena *et al.* (1999) and García de Diego (1968). Although their aim is not the analysis of Basque sound symbolism —the former is a

structure and semantics of these elements. Reasons for this lack of interest in (Basque) linguistics may be found in the widespread view among linguists that considers these words as peripheral to language due to their peculiar structural linguistic properties, or in their characteristic use in oral registers, “a fact —as Voeltz and Kilian-Hatz (2001b: 2) point out— which may well have led to them being ignored in the traditional descriptions of languages that have long since been reduced to writing and where grammatical traditions are based on the elaboration of observations based on written documents”. In what follows I will like to contribute to fill in this important gap in Basque linguistics with a detailed analysis of just one area of Basque sound symbolic words: motion.²

1. Sound symbolism: a brief overview

One of the main problems that we face when we start reviewing sound symbolic literature is the incredible disagreement that exists among researchers on almost every aspect related to these words, i.e. their morpho-syntactic properties, their word class status, their semantics, their distribution... Even in apparently unproblematic issues such as giving a name to these words the literature offers us a never ending list of possibilities: ‘first and second grade onomatopoeiae’ (Ullman), ‘lautsymbolik’ (Schuhardt), ‘mots expresifs’ (Grammond), ‘voces naturales’ (García de Diego), ‘descriptive words’, ‘echo-words’, ‘emphatics’, ‘ideophones’, ‘mimics’, and so on (see Childs 1994 and Samarin 1970, 1971 for a discussion).³ In this paper I will follow the guidelines established in Hinton *et al.* (1994) for the study of sound symbolism. Let us start with their classification for these words.

Hinton *et al.* (1994: 2-5) distinguish four different categories of sound symbolism:

- (i) ‘Corporeal sound symbolism’, that is, “the use of certain sounds or intonation patterns to express the internal state of the speaker, emotional or physical”. E.g. *aiei!*, *atx!* ‘auch!’...
- (ii) ‘Imitative sound symbolism’, i.e. “onomatopoeic words and phrases representing environmental sounds”. E.g. *bal-bal* ‘hard boiling’; *bor-bor* ‘boil noisily’; *pil-pil* ‘simmer’; *dzanga-dzanga* ‘in gulps’; *barrast* ‘ripping’...

Within this group, Hinton *et al.* include those sound symbolic expressions for describing different types of motion, what they call ‘movement imitatives’. They define them as “representation[s] of movement with the same kinds of sound symbolic forms that they use for the representation of sounds” (1994: 3). E.g.

nursery word dictionary and the latter a general sound symbolism dictionary— they offer valuable data our topic.

² The analysis presented in this paper is part of two larger projects: *A Basque-English-Spanish ideophone dictionary* (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 2006a) and *A comprehensive analysis of sound symbolism in Basque* (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 2006b, in prep. a).

³ In this paper, I will mainly use the term ‘sound symbolic word’ in accordance with Hinton *et al.*’s approach. However, I would like to point out that the name ‘ideophone’ is perhaps more suitable and widespread in recent studies (see Voeltz and Kilian-Hatz 2001), and therefore, I will use them both indistinctively.

brista-brista ‘walk very fast’; *dar-dar* ‘tremble’; *firri-farraka* ‘rolling’; *tipi-tapa* ‘walk in small steps’; *zapa-zapa* ‘walk without stopping’...

Although I will not discuss the appropriateness of this term for these cases in Basque any further, I nevertheless feel inclined to disagree with the inclusion of these cases into the second category of imitative sound symbolism. It is true that to some extent they do imitate the sound produced while carrying out these activities, but as I will show later, they also follow some precise phonaesthetic rules. Therefore, I would rather consider these cases, together with those described above, not as belonging to one category or another, but as belonging to what Hamano (1998: 9) refers to as an ‘iconic resemblance scale’;⁴ that is, a continuum that ranges from very ‘iconic’ cases to less or almost lost ‘iconic’ resemblance.

- (iii) ‘Synesthetic sound symbolism’, i.e. “acoustic symbolisation of non-acoustic phenomena [...] the process whereby certain vowels, consonants, and suprasegmentals are chosen to consistently represent visual, tactile, or proprioceptive properties of objects, such as size or shape”. E.g. *ilun-milunka* ‘at dawn’; *ñaño* ‘feeble’; *ñika* ‘wink’; *ñoñorro* ‘small person’...
- (iv) ‘Conventional sound symbolism’, i.e. “analogical association of certain phonemes and clusters with certain meanings”. E.g. Velar plosives + laterals are found in words for gulping as in *klikatu*, *klink egin* or *kulka-kulka*.

In relation to semantic and pragmatic fields expressed by sound symbolic words, Hinton *et al.* (1994: 10) proposed the following:

- (i) Mimicry of environmental and internal sounds
- (ii) Expression of internal states of being, both physical and emotional
- (iii) Expressions of social relationships (as in diminutive forms and vocatives and imperatives, also the expression of opprobrium and stigma)
- (iv) Salient characteristics of objects and activities, such as movement, size, shape, colour, and texture
- (v) Grammatical and discourse indicators, such as intonational markers of discourse and sentence structure, and distinctions between parts of speech.
- (vi) Expression of the evaluative and affective relationship of the speaker being discussed to the subject

As we can see from this list, the possibilities for lexicalisation with sound symbolic words is not reduced to the creation of new descriptive adverbs or interjections. There are different classes of words that vary from nouns, interjections, adverbs... to grammatical function words. This is why some authors have argued that this type of words form themselves a separate universal category, that of ‘ideophones’ (see Voeltz and Kilian-Hatz (2001a and papers therein). In the case of Basque, Trask (1997: 257) argues that sound symbolic words are used in the following cases:

⁴ Hamano’s definition is as follows: “the degree of physical resemblance between a symbol and what it stands for” (1998: 9).

- (i) Nursery words. E.g. *mau-mau* 'eat'
- (ii) Interjections. E.g. *ai!* 'oh!, auch!'; *aida!* 'to encourage cattle to move'
- (iii) Onomatopoeic words. E.g. *kosk!* 'crunch!'
- (iv) Adverbs denoting particular sorts of actions or ways of doing things. E.g. *mara-mara* 'smoothly, steadily, continuously'
- (v) Adjectives and, to a lesser degree, nouns denoting physical or moral defects. E.g. *matxar* 'deformed, twisted'; *moko* 'beak'.
- (vi) Old words with the prefix *ma-*, which has no identifiable semantic value, that are used for forming 'expressive' variants of lexical items. E.g. *gako* 'hook' and its expressive variant *mako* 'hook'

According to this author, sound symbolic words cover specific areas of the lexicon:

- (i) small creatures: insects (*pinpilipauxa* 'butterfly'), creepy-crawlies (*momorro*, *koko* 'bug'), crustaceans (*karramarro* 'crab'), birds (*txirri* 'golden plover'), amphibians (*txorromorro* 'leapfrog'), fish (*txitxarro* 'horse mackerel')
- (ii) types of activity: *txonbo*, *dzanga*, *pulunpa* 'dive'
- (iii) weather phenomena: *txingor* 'hail', *tximist* 'lightning'
- (iv) names of noise making instruments: *txintxirrin* 'baby's rattle'
- (v) physical characteristics: *panpoxa* 'pretty', *handi-mandi* 'pompous'
- (vi) sexual terms: *txuringa* 'anal sphincter'

Due to space constraints I will analyse only Basque movement imitatives in this paper. The data has been drawn from different monolingual and bilingual dictionaries as well as compilations (see reference section for complete list). Since this type of words is not a close-class group—in fact, speakers are always innovating and introducing new words—I do not assume that the list used in this paper is either definite or complete; I hope this list to be expanded in future studies.

Section 2 analyses the structure of these sound symbolic words and Section 3 focuses on their semantics.

2. The structure of movement imitatives

Although each language has its own characteristics for the formation of sound symbolic words, there are several patterns that characteristically appear in this type of words in a wide variety of languages. Two of the strategies proposed in Hinton *et al.* (1994: 9) are the following:⁵

- (i) Reduplication: total and partial.
- (ii) Use of unusual segments and suprasegmentals.

In the case of Basque movement imitatives—and in sound symbolism in general—we find examples for each of these strategies. Let us examine them one by one.

⁵ These authors also include a third strategy: the association of certain phoneme classes with certain semantic fields. I will not deal with it in this paper because I only focus on one semantic area: motion. For more information about this issue, see Ibarretxe-Antuñano (in prep. a).

2.1. Reduplication

Although Hinton *et al.* (1994: 9) suggest that European languages use reduplication less than other languages, we find that this is one of the most frequent strategies in Basque sound symbolic words; 44% of movement imitatives in our corpus use reduplication. There are numerous cases of ‘total reduplication’—37% in our corpus—such as those in (1):

- (1) *bira-biraka*⁶ ‘swinging, twirling’; *brista-brista* ‘walk very fast’; *draka-draka* ‘trot’; *fara-fara* ‘light motion’; *fil fil* ‘fall down in circles and slowly’; *taka-taka* ‘toddling’; *tapa-tapa* ‘tip-toeing’; *txaka-txaka* ‘walk step by step’; *txapla-txapla* ‘splish-splash’; *zanga-zanga* ‘walk clumsily’, *zapa-zapa* ‘walk without stopping’

Partial reduplication is also very common, 62% in our corpus. In most cases, there is vowel alternation: the first morph contains a high vowel—usually /i/—and the second morph a mid vowel /a/ and/or a low vowel /o/ as illustrated in (2):

- (2) a. /i/ - /a/ alternation
bilin-balan ‘tumbling’; *bilist-balast* ‘sway’; *bristi-brasta* ‘walk very fast’; *dilin-dalan* ‘swinging’; *dzist-dzast* ‘plodding along’; *fistin-fastan* ‘walk angrily’; *firri-farraka* ‘rolling’; *hinkili-hankala* ‘limping along’; *plisti-plasta*, *txipli-txapla* ‘splish-splash’; *tipi-tapa* ‘walk in small steps’
- b. /i/ - /o/ alternation
binbili-bonbolo ‘rocking’; *kili-kolo* ‘wobbling’; *tikili-tokolo* ‘walk with difficulty’
- c. /i/ - /a/ /o/ alternation
bilin-bolan ‘tumbling’; *dingili-dangolo* ‘staggering’;

Apart from the abovementioned vowel alternations, Basque shows another type of partial reduplication: consonant alternation. There are different possibilities as illustrated (3):

- (3) a. the presence of an initial *m* in the second morph
angula-mangula, *xingola-mingola*, *zeharka-meharka* ‘zig-zag’;
halda-maldaka ‘staggering’, *ingura-mingura* ‘running around’
- b. the presence of an initial *z* in the second morph
arret-zarret ‘zig-zag’
- c. the presence of an initial *b* in the second morph: *jira-biraka* ‘spinning, twirling’

We also find cases where the partial reduplication shows both vowel and consonant alternation as in (4)

- (4) *inki-manka* ‘teetering’; *kikili-makala* ‘stagger’

⁶ Cases with the iterative suffix *-ka* are not counted separately.

2.2. Use of unusual segments and suprasegmentals

One of the main distinguishing characteristics of sound symbolic words is their tendency to employ a peculiar phonology that places them apart from other words in the language. This feature is also true of Basque sound symbolic forms. These words have sounds that seem to exclusively appear in these cases as the voiced lamino-alveolar *dz*, or sounds and sequences of sounds that only seldom occur in the rest of the lexicon such as word-initial affricates and word-final palatals (Hualde 1991: 12). We also find sounds that, despite being common in the lexicon nowadays, tend to appear in non-native words or recent loans such as word-initial plosives, the labio-dental fricative *f*, and word-initial clusters formed by plosives or *f* + liquids (Trask 1997: 258).⁷ Let us see some examples:

- (i) Initial voiceless plosives as in
 - (5) *palast egin* 'splash about'; *pinpili-panpala* 'tumble around'; *pirrikita* 'sliding'; *pirritatu* 'roll'; *plisti-plasta* 'splish-splash'; *pulunpatu* 'dive'; *tikili-tokolo* 'walk with difficulty'; *tipi-tapa* 'walk in small steps'; *ttaka-ttaka* 'take small steps'; *kirriz-karraz* 'shuffling'; *kriskiti-kraskata* 'tumble'...
- (ii) Initial voiced plosives as in
 - (6) *Bilintzi-balantza* 'staggering'; *bilist-balast* 'rocking'; *danga* 'crash'; *dardar* 'trembling'; *dilin-dalan* 'swinging'; *dinbirri-danbarra* 'drag'; *dingon-dangon* 'walk clumsily'...
- (iii) Initial affricates are not very frequent, especially the voiced lamino-alveolar *dz*, which is only found in this type of words, as in
 - (7) *dzanga* 'dive'; *dzapart* 'jump, leap'; *dzast* 'put/throw sth. into corner'; *dzauan* 'walk slowly and swinging'; *dzilipurta* 'splish-splash'; *dzist-dzast* 'plodding along'; *txaka-txaka* 'walk step by step'; *txipli-txapla* 'splish-splash'; *txirrist* 'slide'; *txolol* 'slide'...
- (iv) Initial voiceless labiodental fricative *f* as in
 - (8) *fara-fara* 'light motion'; *farrastan* 'sudden motion'; *farrastaz* 'run hastily'; *fhistin-fhastan* 'walk angrily'; *fil fil fil* 'fall down in circles and slowly'; *firri-farraka* 'rolling'; *firurika* 'spin, whirl'; *furruntzetaka* 'rolling'...
- (v) Initial voiceless laminal alveolar fricative *z* as in
 - (9) *zabu-zabuka* 'teetering, tottering'; *zanga-zanga* 'walk clumsily'; *zapart* 'jump, leap'; *zapa-zapa* 'walk without stopping'; *zapla-zapla* 'splash'; *zarabanda* 'teeter-tooter'; *zipi-zapa* 'pell-mell'; *zirrin-zarran* 'drag heavy object'...

⁷ For more information about Basque synchronic and diachronic phonetics and phonology, i.e. phoneme inventories, orthography, phonotactics... see Hualde (1991), Hualde *et al.* (1993), Hualde and Ortiz de Urbina (2003), Michelena (1985), Trask (1997), among others.

- (vi) Initial clusters are also very restricted —plosives or /f/ + liquid— and they usually occur not only in recent loan words (Trask 1997: 87), but also in the following sound symbolic words:
- (10) *brasta* ‘walk, step firmly’; *draka-draka* ‘trot’; *kriskiti-kraskata* ‘tumble’; *traska* ‘start running stealthily’...
- (vii) Final plosives as in
- (11) *Arrast egin* ‘drag, crawl’; *arret-zarret* ‘zig-zag’; *bilist-balast* ‘sway’; *blaust* ‘splash, splat’; *dart-dart* ‘trembling’; *dzanp* ‘stop suddenly’; *dzast* ‘put/throw sth. into corner’; *irrist* ‘slide’; *laprast* ‘slip’; *must egin* ‘dive’; *palast egin* ‘splash about’; *pirrist* ‘gushing’; *tenk egin* ‘stop’; *tupust egin* ‘run into’; *zapart* ‘jump, leap’...
- (viii) Palatal consonants as in
- (12) *xingola-mingola* ‘zig-zag’; *txaka-txaka* ‘walk step by step’; *txipli-txapla* ‘splish-splash’; *txirrist* ‘slide’; *txolol* ‘slide’; *ttaka-ttaka* ‘take small steps’...
- (ix) The nasal *m* as in
- (13) *angula-mangula*, *xingola-mingola*, *zeharka-meharka* ‘zig-zag’; *halda-maldaka* ‘staggering’; *ingura-mingura* ‘running around’...

3. The semantics of movement imitatives

All the sound symbolic words that I have selected for this paper have in common the fact that they describe certain aspects or characteristics of movement. In order to classify these words by their meaning, I will use Talmy’s (1985, 1991, 2000) well-known typology of semantic components for motion events.⁸ These are the following: ‘Figure’: the moving object; ‘Ground’: entity or entities that the Figure is moving in relation to; ‘Motion’: the presence of motion per se; ‘Path’: the course followed (and trajectory) of the Figure; ‘Manner’: the way in which motion is performed; and ‘Cause’: what originates the motion itself.

In the corpus, the majority of movement imitatives —76%— are used to describe the semantic component of Manner. These words, sometimes used as adverbs (*doke-dokeka* ‘limping’) sometimes used as verbs (*irristatu* ‘slide’), offer us detailed and varied information about different characteristics of the way motion is carried out. In previous analyses of this component, authors such as Slobin (2000) and Ibarretxe-Antuñano (2004, in press) have subdivided Manner into different semantic categories. Let us see what we find in our corpus:

- (i) Motor pattern: different body positions for performing motion. Within this category we can include the following:
- (a) Ways of walking as in
- (14) *taka-taka* ‘toddling’; *tapa-tapa* ‘walk lightly’; *tipi-tapa* ‘pitter patter’; *zapa-zapa* ‘walk without stopping’

⁸ Talmy defines motion events as situations “containing movement or the maintenance of a stationary location” (Talmy 1985: 85).

- (b) Ways of running
 (15) *antxitzika* ‘running’; *arrapaladan* ‘running’; *atxi-atxika* ‘running’; *dzapartada* ‘rushing’; *draka-draka* ‘trot’; *traska* ‘start running stealthily’
- (c) Ways of jumping
 (16) *doke-dokeka* ‘hobbling’; *dzapart* ‘jump’; *txaplasta* ‘rock skipping’; *zabu-zabuka* ‘bounce around’
- (ii) Smooth motion: motion flows
 (17) *bilist-balast* ‘slap / sway, swinging, rocking’; *binbili-bonbolo* ‘rocking’; *binbilika* ‘swaying, teetering, rocking’; *binbilikatu* ‘wobble, rock’; *bira-biraka* ‘swinging, twirling’; *dalandatu, danbalada, dilin-dalan, dintzili-dantzalaka* ‘swing’; *daldar, dar-dar, dart-dart* ‘tremble’; *dildira* ‘light trembling’; *dringili-drangala* ‘rocking, cradling’; *firri-farraka, firrindaka, firristan, furruntzetaka, pirritatu* ‘rolling’; *irrist, irrist egin, laprast, txirrist, txirrist egin, txirristatu, txokol* ‘slipping, sliding’; *laprast egin* ‘slid’; *pirrikita, txokoldu* ‘sliding, gliding, slipping’
- (iii) Obstructed motion: there is some impediment or obstacle
 (18) *bili-bolan* ‘trumbling, toppling’; *bilin-balan* ‘trumbling, toppling’; *danga* ‘crash, impact, collision’; *kriskiti-kraskata* ‘tumble’; *pinpili-panpala ibili* ‘tumble around’; *pirrita* ‘tumble, rolling down’; *pirritaka* ‘tumbling, falling downhill’; *talka* ‘bump, hit’; *talka egin* ‘bump into, knock against, run into’; *tupust egin* ‘block, obstruct, run into’
- (iv) Furtive motion: hidden purpose
 (19) *arrast egin* ‘creep’; *taka-taka ibili* ‘creep along’
- (v) Forced motion: motion requires an effort to be performed
 (20) *dinbirri-danbarra* ‘drag’; *dsast* ‘insert something violently’; *dzalapartaka* ‘move clumsily, agitatingly’; *dzast* ‘throw sth. and put it into an opening or corner’; *kirrikili-karrakala* ‘clumsily’; *narrastaka* ‘dragging’; *ozta-ozta* ‘with great difficulty’; *tatarrez* ‘dragging’; *tirriki-tarraka* ‘lagging, straggling’; *zirrin-zarran* ‘drag a heavy object’
- (vi) Rate: speed of motion
 (a) Fast
 (21) *bor-bor* ‘gushing, spurting’; *burrustan (atera)* ‘gush out’; *darrast egin* ‘escape, change direction briskly’; *farrastan* ‘sudden movement’; *farrastaz* ‘run hastily’; *firrindan* ‘speedily, fast’; *fristan* ‘quickly, fast, hastily’; *haia-haia* ‘quickly, fast, hastily’; *pirrist* ‘gushing’; *sost* ‘suddenly’
- (b) Slow
 (22) *fara-fara* ‘light motion’; *fil fil fil* ‘fall down in circles and slowly’
- (vii) Inner state of Figure: psychological state
 (23) *fhistin fhastan* ‘walk angrily’

There are, of course, cases where the same sound-symbolic expression offers us information about more than one of the semantic categories above. For example, the conflation of motor pattern with either rate or forced motion is very frequent as illustrated in (24):

- (24) (a) ways of running + rate, rapid
arrapaladan ‘run fast’; *dzapartaka* ‘rushing’
 (b) ways of walking + rate, fast
brista-brista ‘walk very fast’; *bristi-brasta* ‘walk hastily’
 (c) ways of walking + rate, slow
tiki-taka ‘take small steps’; *txaka-txaka* ‘walk step by step’
 (d) ways of walking + forced motion
dzist-dzast ‘plodding along’; *kirriz-karraz* ‘shuffling’; *zanga-zanga* ‘walk clumsily’

Apart from Manner of motion sound symbolic words, we also find words describing two other components: Ground and Path.⁹ For the semantic component of Ground we find the following:

- (25) *blaust* ‘splash into water or mud’; *bulunbatu*, *dzanga*, *must egin*, *pulunpa* ‘dive’; *dzast* ‘put/throw sb. into an opening or corner’; *dzaust* ‘put/throw sb. into an opening or corner deeper than *dzast*’; *dzilipurta*, *palast egin*, *plisti-plasta*, *txipli-txapla*, *zapla-zapla*, ‘splish-splash’; *firiri* ‘rotative motion of an object thrown in the air’; *txapla-txapla* ‘walk barefoot on the water’; *txaplasta* ‘rock skipping’...

As we can see from these examples, in most cases Ground sound symbolic expressions are related to water, and to a lesser degree to other places —mud (*blaust*), opening/corner (*dzast*, *dzaust*), air (*firiri*) and rocks (*txaplasta*).

With respect to Path sound symbolic expressions, these give us information about the contour —the shape of the path describe by the Figure— in most cases, and about the direction of Path in the rest.

- (26) *angula-mangula*, *arret-zarret*, *xingola-mingola*, *zebarka-meharka* ‘zig-zag’; *firiri* ‘rotative motion of an object thrown in the air’; *firirika* ‘rotate’; *but* ‘get away’; *dsast* ‘insert sth. violently’

In some cases these sound symbolic words are so specific that they do not only describe one of Talmy’s semantic components but two or more as in the following examples:

- (27) *darrast egin* ‘change direction briskly’, i.e. information about Manner (rate-rapid) and Path
dsast ‘insert sth. violently’, i.e. information about Manner (forced) and Path
fil fil fil ‘fall down in circles and slowly’, i.e. information about Manner (rate-slow) and Path (contour)

⁹ Since the semantic component of Motion is included in the majority of these words, I will not deal with it any further in this paper.

dzast ‘put/throw sth. into an opening or corner’, i.e. information about Manner (forced) and Ground

firiri ‘rotative motion of an object thrown in the air’, i.e. information about Path (contour) and Ground.

bar bar ‘rhythmic falling of a light body’, i.e. information about Manner, Path and Figure

4. Conclusions

In this paper, I have demonstrated that Basque is a language very rich in sound symbolic words. I have focused my analysis on a very small selection —over a hundred and fifty examples— of these words, those related to the semantic field of motion. These so-called ‘movement imitatives’ have been studied from two different perspectives: their structure and their semantics. Results from this investigation are summarised in the Appendix.

There are still many areas that deserve our attention and that I have not even touched on in this paper; areas of conflict not only for Basque sound symbolism but for the field in general. For example, the grammatical status of these sound symbolic words. Some authors (de Jong 2001) include them along different categories, i.e. adjectives, adverbs, etc., while many others consider them as a separate word class (Doke 1935). In Basque, we also find sound symbolic words cross-categorially —adjectives as *handi-mandi* ‘pompous’, and nouns as *pinpili-pauxa* ‘butterfly’— although in the specific case of movement imitatives they mainly act as adverbs as in *doke-dokeka* ‘limping’ or *tipi tapa (sartu)* ‘enter walking in small steps’, and as complex predicates with the verb *egin* ‘make, do’ as in *must egin* ‘dive’ or *dar-dar egin* ‘tremble’.

Another important topic is the analysis of their distribution across discourse genres or types. Many authors have considered them exclusively part of spoken language but, as others have suggested, they also appear in written texts as it occurs in Basque (see Voeltz and Kilian-Hatz (2001) and papers therein for a survey of different opinions). Perhaps the only way-out to solve this incongruence is to consider them a trait of what Koch and Osterreicher (1985) call ‘conceptually oral languages’, i.e. written languages that preserve and show features of oral discourse such as elliptic constructions, congruence violations, hyperbolic expressions and so on.

The vitality and sociolinguistics of these words are also interesting paths of study. Authors such as Childs consider them “quintessentially social [...] and grounded in social interaction” (2001: 63), and suggest that their use can be measured by sociolinguistic factors such as age —older speakers use them more frequently than younger ones—, residence —countryside speakers employ them more frequently than urban ones (cf. also Amha 2001)— and rusticity—the more culturally traditional a speaker’s values are the more likely that person would use and know sound symbolic words. Interestingly enough, Childs (1998) reports that even a rich in sound symbolic words language such as Zulu is in the process of loosing its sound symbolic lexicon precisely due to these social forces. In Basque, sound symbolic words are still part of everyday use and communication as both

Muguruza's lyrics and the Ibilaldia logo attest. However, it seems also true that younger speakers do not use them so frequently and, what is more, that they do not know as many as older speakers do (cf. also Kabuta 2001).

In any case, I hope that with this contribution I have called the attention of Basque linguists towards this area of our language not only because it is unfortunately understudied but also because, as Ameka (2001: 45) rightly claims, these words are "an integral part of the languages in which they occur. It is time for linguists and linguistic anthropologists not only to describe them as a curiosity of these languages but to go further and include them in the data they consider in making typological generalisations about specific parts of the languages or of the languages as a whole".

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Appendix: Movement imitatives in Basque: their structure and semantics

No	Ideophone	Translation	Structure		Semantics	
			reduplication	segments	components	details
1.	<i>angula-man-gula</i>	zig-zag	partial, m, i-a	nasal m	path	contour
2.	<i>antxintxika</i>	running		palatal	manner	mp-run, rate-rapid
3.	<i>arrapaladan</i>	running			manner	mp-run, rate-rapid
4.	<i>arrast egin</i>	drag, crawl		final plosive	manner	furtive/ forced
5.	<i>arret-zarret</i>	zig-zag	partial, z	final plosive	path	contour
6.	<i>atxi-atxika</i>	running	total	palatal	manner	mp-run, rate-rapid
7.	<i>bar-bar</i>	rythmic falling of a light body	total	initial voiced	manner, path, figure	rate
8.	<i>bili-bolan</i>	tumbling, toppling /turning over	partial, i-o-a	initial voiced	manner	obstructed
9.	<i>bilin-balan</i>	tumbling, toppling /turning over	partial, i-a	initial voiced	manner	obstructed
10.	<i>bilintzi-balantza</i>	staggering, reeling	partial, i-a	initial voiced	manner	mp-walk
11.	<i>bilist-balast</i>	slap / sway, swinging, rocking	partial, i-a	initial voiced final plosive	manner	smooth
12.	<i>binbili-bon-bolo</i>	rocking	partial, i-o	initial voiced	manner	smooth
13.	<i>binbilika</i>	swaying, teetering, rocking		initial voiced	manner	smooth
14.	<i>binbilikatu</i>	wobble, rock		initial voiced	manner	smooth
15.	<i>birabiraka</i>	swinning, twirling	total	initial voiced	manner	smooth
16.	<i>blaust</i>	splash (fall into water)		initial voiced final plosive	ground	water
17.	<i>blaust</i>	splat (fall into mud)		initial cluster final plosive	ground	mud
18.	<i>bor-bor</i>	gushing, spurting	total	initial voiced	manner	rate-rapid

19.	<i>brasta</i>	walk, step firmly		initial cluster	manner	mp-walk
20.	<i>brista-brista</i>	walk very fast	total	initial cluster	manner	mp-walk, rate-rapid
21.	<i>bristi-brasta</i>	walk and work hastily	partial, i-a	initial cluster	manner	mp-walk, rate-rapid
22.	<i>bulunbatu</i>	splatter		initial voiced	ground, manner	water
23.	<i>bulundatu</i>	submerge, dive sb into the water		initial voiced	ground	water
24.	<i>burrustan (atera)</i>	gush out		initial voiced	manner	rate-rapid
25.	<i>but</i>	get away!		initial voiced final plosive	path	
26.	<i>dalandatu</i>	swing		initial voiced	manner	smooth
27.	<i>daldar</i>	tremble		initial voiced	manner	smooth
28.	<i>danbalada</i>	swing		initial voiced	manner	smooth
29.	<i>danga</i>	crash, impact, collision		initial voiced	manner	obstructed
30.	<i>dar-dar</i>	trembling	total	initial voiced	manner	smooth
31.	<i>dar-dar egin</i>	tremble	total	initial voiced	manner	smooth
32.	<i>darrast egin</i>	escape, change direction briskly		initial voiced final plosive	manner, path	rate-rapid
33.	<i>dart-dart</i>	trembling	total	initial voiced final plosive	manner	smooth
34.	<i>dildira</i>	light trembling		initial voiced	manner	smooth
35.	<i>dilinda(n)</i>	hanging		initial voiced	manner	mp
36.	<i>dilin-dalan</i>	swinging	partial, i-a	initial voiced	manner	smooth
37.	<i>dilindatu</i>	hang		initial voiced	manner	mp

38.	<i>dinbili-danbala</i>	staggering movement, swinging	partial, i-a	initial voiced	manner	mp-walk
39.	<i>dinbirri-danbarra</i>	drag	partial, i-a	initial voiced	manner	forced
40.	<i>dindilizka</i>	hanging, suspending		initial voiced	manner	mp
41.	<i>dingili-dangolo</i>	staggering, swaying	partial, i-a-o	initial voiced	manner	mp-walk
42.	<i>dingolon-dangolon</i>	walk clumsily	partial, i-a	initial voiced	manner	mp-walk, forced
43.	<i>dingon-dangon</i>	walk clumsily	partial, i-a	initial voiced	manner	mp-walk, forced
44.	<i>dintzili-dantzalaka</i>	swing	partial, i-a	initial voiced	manner	smooth
45.	<i>doke-dokeka</i>	limping, hobbling on one's lame leg	total	initial voiced	manner	mp-jump
46.	<i>drak</i>	stop suddenly		initial cluster final plosive	extent	
47.	<i>draka-draka</i>	trot	total	initial cluster	manner	mp-run
48.	<i>dringili-drangala</i>	rocking, cradling	partial, i-a	initial cluster	manner	smooth
49.	<i>dsast</i>	insert something violently		initial ds, final plosive	path, manner	forced
50.	<i>dzalapartaka</i>	move clumsily, agitatingly		initial dz	manner	forced
51.	<i>dzanga</i>	dive		initial dz	ground	water
52.	<i>dzanga egin</i>	dive		initial dz	ground	water
53.	<i>dzanp</i>	bam, stop suddenly		initial dz, final plosive	extent	
54.	<i>dzapart</i>	jump, leap		initial dz, final plosive	manner	mp-jump
55.	<i>dzapart egin</i>	jump		initial dz, final plosive	manner	mp-jump
56.	<i>dzapartada</i>	jump, leap		initial dz	manner	mp-jump
57.	<i>dzapartaka</i>	rushing		initial dz	manner	mp-run, rate-rapid
58.	<i>dzapartatu</i>	jump, bound		initial dz	manner	mp-jump
59.	<i>dzast</i>	throw + put sth into an opening or corner		initial dz, final plosive	manner, ground	forced, corner

60.	<i>dzauan</i> (<i>dzauan</i>)	walk slowly and swin- ging		initial dz	manner	mp-walk, rate-slow
61.	<i>dzaust</i>	throw + put sth into an opening or corner deeper than <i>dzast</i>		initial dz, final plosive	manner, ground	forced, corner
62.	<i>dzilipurta</i>	splish-splash		initial dz, final plosive	ground	water
63.	<i>dzist-dzast</i>	plodding along	partial, i-a	initial dz, final plosive	manner	mp-walk, forced
64.	<i>fara-fara</i>	light motion	total	initial f	manner	rate-slow
65.	<i>farrastan</i>	sudden, brisk movement		initial f	manner	rate-rapid
66.	<i>farrastaz (s)</i>	run hastily		initial f	manner	rate-rapid
67.	<i>fhistin-fhas- tan</i>	angry walk	partial, i-a	initial f	manner	inner state
68.	<i>fil fil fil</i>	fall down in circles and slowly	total	initial f	manner, path	rate-slow
69.	<i>firiri</i>	rotative motion of an object thrown in the air		initial f	path, ground	contour, air
70.	<i>firirika(ka)</i>	move in rotation, rotate		initial f	path	contour
71.	<i>firri-farraka</i>	rolling	partial, i-a	initial f	manner	smooth
72.	<i>firindaka</i>	rolling		initial f	manner	smooth
73.	<i>firindan</i>	speedily, fast		initial f	manner	rate-rapid
74.	<i>firristan</i>	rolling		initial f	manner	smooth
75.	<i>firurika</i>	spin, turning; whirling, spinning		initial f	manner	smooth, rate-rapid
76.	<i>fristan</i>	quickly, fast, hastily		initial f	manner	rate-rapid
77.	<i>furruntze- taka</i>	rolling		initial f	manner	smooth
78.	<i>haia-haia</i>	quickly, fast, hastily	total	initial f	manner	rate-rapid
79.	<i>halda-mal- daka</i>	staggering, tottering, reeling	partial, m	nasal m	manner	mp-walk
80.	<i>hinkili- hankala</i>	limping along, walk with difficulty	partial, i-a		manner	mp-walk, forced
81.	<i>ingura-min- gura</i>	running around	partial, m	nasal m	manner	mp-run, rate-rapid
82.	<i>inki-manka</i>	teetering	partial, m, i-a	nasal m	manner	mp-walk
83.	<i>irrist</i>	slipping, sliding		final plosive	manner	smooth
84.	<i>irrist egin</i>	slid, slide		final plosive	manner	smooth

85.	<i>jiraka-bi-raka</i>	spinning, twirling	partial, b		manner	smooth, rate-rapid
86.	<i>kikili-makala</i>	keep upright with difficulty, stagger	partial, m, i-a	nasal m	manner	mp-walk, forced
87.	<i>kili-kolo</i>	wobbling	partial, i-o	initial voiceless	manner	forced
88.	<i>kirrikili-karrakala</i>	clumsily	partial, i-a	initial voiceless	manner	forced
89.	<i>kirriz-karraz</i>	shuffling	partial, i-a	initial voiceless	manner	mp-walk, forced
90.	<i>kriskiti-kraskata</i>	tumble	partial, i-a	initial cluster	manner	obstructed
91.	<i>laprast</i>	slip, slide		final plosive	manner	smooth
92.	<i>laprast egin</i>	slid		final plosive	manner	smooth
93.	<i>must egin</i>	dive		final plosive, nasal m	ground	water
94.	<i>narrastaka</i>	dragging			manner	forced
95.	<i>ozta-ozta</i>	with great difficulty	total		manner	forced
96.	<i>palast egin</i>	swish around, splash about		initial voiceless final plosive	ground	water
97.	<i>pinpili-panpala ibili</i>	tumble around	partial, i-a	initial voiceless	manner	obstructed
98.	<i>pinpoil</i>	somersault toll, tumble		initial voiceless	manner	obstructed
99.	<i>pirrikita</i>	sliding, gliding, slipping		initial voiceless	manner	smooth
100.	<i>pirrist</i>	gushing		initial voiceless, final plosive	manner	rate-rapid
101.	<i>pirrita</i>	tumble, rolling down		initial voiceless	manner	obstructed
102.	<i>pirritaka</i>	tumbling, falling downhill		initial voiceless	manner	obstructed
103.	<i>pirritatu</i>	roll		initial voiceless	manner	smooth
104.	<i>plash egin</i>	splash		initial cluster	ground	water
105.	<i>plisti-plasta</i>	splish-splash	partial, i-a	initial cluster	ground	water
106.	<i>pulunpa egin</i>	dive, take a plunge		initial voiceless	ground	water

107.	<i>pulunpatu</i>	dive, submerge		initial voiceless	ground	water
108.	<i>sost</i>	suddenly		final plosive	manner	rate-rapid
109.	<i>taka-taka</i>	toddling	total	initial voiceless	manner	mp-walk
110.	<i>taka-taka ibili</i>	creep along	total	initial voiceless	manner	furtive
111.	<i>talka</i>	bump, hit		initial voiceless	manner	obstructed
112.	<i>talka egin</i>	bump into, knock against		initial voiceless	manner	obstructed
113.	<i>tapa-tapa</i>	walking lightly, tip-toeing	total	initial voiceless	manner	mp-walk
114.	<i>tatarrez</i>	dragging		initial voiceless	manner	forced
115.	<i>tenk</i>	halt! Stop!		initial voiceless, final plosive	extent	
116.	<i>tenk egin</i>	stop, come to a stop		initial voiceless, final plosive	extent	
117.	<i>tikili-takala</i>	walk with some difficulty	partial, i-a	initial voiceless	manner	forced
118.	<i>tikili-tokolo</i>	walk with difficulty	partial, i-o	initial voiceless	manner	forced
119.	<i>tiki-taka</i>	little by little, step by step, one step at time	partial, i-a	initial voiceless	manner	mp-walk, rate-slow
120.	<i>tipi-tapa</i>	pitter-patter	partial, i-a	initial voiceless	manner	mp-walk
121.	<i>tirriki-tarraka</i>	lagging, straggling	partial, i-a	initial voiceless	manner	forced
122.	<i>tirriki-tarraka ibili</i>	be dragging one's feet	partial, i-a	initial voiceless	manner	mp-walk, forced
123.	<i>taska</i>	start running stealthily		initial cluster	manner	mp-run, rate-rapid
124.	<i>trosta</i>	trot		initial cluster	manner	mp-run, rate-rapid
125.	<i>ttaka-ttaka</i>	taking small steps, taking baby steps, slowly	total	initial voiceless	manner	mp-walk, rate-slow
126.	<i>tupust</i>	run-in		initial voiceless, final plosive	manner	obstructed

127.	<i>tupust egin</i>	block, obstruct, run into		initial voiceless, final plosive	manner	obstructed
128.	<i>txaka-txaka</i>	walk step by step	total	palatal	manner	mp-walk, rate-slow
129.	<i>txaplasta</i>	rock skipping		palatal	manner, ground	mp-jump
130.	<i>txapla-txapla</i>	splash-splash, walking barefoot on the water	total	palatal	ground	water
131.	<i>txilinbuelta</i>	somersault, tumble		palatal	manner	smooth
132.	<i>txipli-txapla</i>	splash-splash	partial, i-a	palatal	ground	water
133.	<i>txirrist</i>	slide, slipping		palatal, final plosive	manner	smooth
134.	<i>txirrist egin</i>	slip, slide, glide		palatal, final plosive	manner	smooth
135.	<i>txirristatu</i>	slip, slide		palatal, final plosive	manner	smooth
136.	<i>txokol</i>	slide, slip		palatal	manner	smooth
137.	<i>txokoldu</i>	slide, slip, glide		palatal	manner	smooth
138.	<i>xingola-mingola</i>	zig-zag	partial, m	palatal	path	contour
139.	<i>zabu-zabuka</i>	teetering, tottering	total	initial z	manner	mp-walk
140.	<i>zabu-zabuka ibili</i>	bounce around	total	initial z	manner	mp-jump
141.	<i>zanga-zanga</i>	walk clumsily, awkwardly	total	initial z	manner	mp-walk, forced
142.	<i>zapat</i>	jump, leap		initial z	manner	mp-jump
143.	<i>zapat egin</i>	clash, clatter; jump leap		initial z	manner	mp-jump
144.	<i>zapa-zapa</i>	walk without stopping	total	initial z	manner	mp-walk
145.	<i>zapla-zapla</i>	splash	total	initial z	ground	water
146.	<i>zarabanda</i>	teeter-tooter		initial z	manner	mp-walk
147.	<i>zarabandatu</i>	teeter-tooter		initial z	manner	mp-walk
148.	<i>zebarka-meharka</i>	zig-zag	partial, m	initial z	path	contour
149.	<i>zintzilipurdi</i>	somersault		initial z	manner	smooth
150.	<i>zipi-zapa</i>	pell-mell, helter-skelter	partial, i-a	initial z	manner	mp-walk, rate-rapid
151.	<i>zirrin-zarrian</i>	drag a heavy object	partial, i-a	initial z	manner	forced