Is Basque an Agglutinative Language?
A Proposal for the Diachrony of Nominal Morphology

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1. Introduction

The title of this paper is reminiscent of de Rijk's (1969) "Is Basque an SOV language?". This SOV pattern, together with agglutination and ergativity are maybe the most characteristic features of Basque, or at least the most often mentioned ones. In this article, I will look at agglutination; whereas de Rijk dealt with word order issues from a synchronic point of view, I will deal with agglutination in diachronic terms. To that extent, both works only share the similarity of titles and the interest for labels that are typically used for Basque.

I will start this paper with a non-compromising answer to the question of the title, saying that Basque's agglutinative character depends on what we look at, and on how we look at it; as for what am I looking at, the answer is nominal declension, and as for how will I look at it, as previously mentioned, a diachronic view of the issue will be at stake.

The paper will be organized as follows: I will first offer some basic background on agglutination, grammaticalization of demonstratives and Basque relevant data in section 2. Section 3 will be devoted to the problems of Basque declension seen diachronically, with a proposal for their solution. In section 4, keeping in mind what we have said in the previous section, I will offer some remarks about agglutination and its exact role in the diachrony of Basque.

2. Basic background

In this section I will offer the basic background needed for the discussion. I will first consider some theoretical background, talking about agglutination and the grammaticalization path of demonstratives and articles, and then I will sketch the Basque declension of nouns and distal demonstratives.

2.1. Theoretical background
2.1.1. Agglutination
We can summarize the notion of agglutination saying that agglutinative morphology is where each morpheme bears a single meaning. This is the idea expressed in Spencer:

> In an "ideal" morphological system each morpheme contributes one meaning and each meaning is associated with just one morpheme ("one form – one function"). Such a morphological ideal is often called

agglutination (and morphologists still sometimes speak of "agglutinating" languages where this type of morphology predominates). (2001: 224)

As I said above, in this paper I will deal with nominal declension, focusing on how different cases in their definite paradigm evolved. Let's then consider Lehmann's more specific quote regarding case:

> An agglutinative case affix is one which expresses only a case meaning, is morphologically optional (i.e. if subtracted from its carrier, it leaves a grammatical form) and attached to the noun with a clear morphological boundary, such as *Peter's* or Turk. *–de* in *ev-de* (house-LOC) «in the house». A fusional case affix is one which simultaneously expresses other morphological categories, is morphologically obligatory and partly fused with the stem, e.g. Latin *aedibus*, abl. pl. f. of *aedes* «house». (1985: 303)

This is how Basque nominal declension is said to be; we can find examples similar to those given for Turkish, like in (1), where *mendi* stands for 'mountain', *–a* for the definite article translatable as 'the', and *–n* for the locative case::

(1)   mendi-a-n   'in the mountain'

A similar pattern can be found in plural inflected nominal phrases, although morphemes start to become more opaque:

(2)   mendi-e-k   'the mountains' (ERGATIVE)

In (2) *-k* would be analyzed as the ergative case marker, and in this morpheme by morpheme analysis *–e-* is usually said to be the plural marker. The character of this morpheme is not so self-evident, since strictly speaking we have no autonomous plurality marker for nouns, and when assuming we do have one, the morpheme *–k* is usually the main candidate to be assigned to such a category.

Thus, agglutination as defined above can help understand some facts of the Basque nominal declension, but it seems that further analysis may be required.

2.1.2. Demonstratives in their diachronic dimension

The demonstrative-to-article grammaticalization path is a well known one, described for many languages; Romance languages are a good example of it (Epstein 1994, Lapesa 1961). Greenberg (1978), and following him Himmelmann (2001) describe it as continuum scale, where a certain morpheme, the distal demonstrative, acquires further semantic and functional values as it spreads

during its diachronic development. Here is the basic sketch of this grammaticalization path, as given in Himmelmann (2001: 832):

(3) demonstrative → definite article → specific article → noun marker

It is important to bear in mind that these different terms are applied to a single morpheme in its several occurrences across the time axis, and that, to that extent, they are no more than conventionalized agreements motivated by a purely methodological convenience. As a cover term, intended to express the idea of "same demonstrative morpheme in its different forms and functions across time", Himmelmann uses the term "D-element".

Now, what about Basque? Is there something like a definite article, derived diachronically from a demonstrative? The answer is yes; as shown in (1), Basque has a definite article –*a*, which is diachronically derived from an ancient distal demonstrative **ha(r)* (Trask 1997: 199). Indeed, we find ancient articles of the form –*ha* in Middle Age documents (Manterola 2006: 674), documents that will appear to be crucial for a better understanding of the relation between declension and demonstratives; I will return to them below.

But there is a question that can help us delve deeper in our analysis: aren't there more D-elements in Basque declension? Answering this question will lead us to a better understanding of less clear nominal declension instances as the one depicted in (2).

2.2. Basque declension: a sketch

In this section I will illustrate declension paradigms through four tables. In the first table I will offer how the distal demonstrative (*h*)*a*, *hura* 'that' is declined.

Table 1. Declension of distal demonstrative (*h*)*a*, *hura* 'that'

	SING.	PL.	
Absolutive[1]	ha, hura	hak	'that / those'
Ergative	ha(r)k	hek	'that / those'
Genitive	haren	hen	'of that / of those'
Locative	hartan (han)	hetan	'in that / in those'
Ablative	hantik	hetatik	'from there / from those'
Adlative	hara	hetara	'to there / to those'

This paradigm is a somehow idealized or reconstructed one, although all the forms are attested in one or other dialect with the caveat that the initial

consonant (here represented as an aspiration) is not pronounced in every variant of the language.

It is worth noting that the original character of the initial sound of demonstratives (in the boxes in table 1) is not clear yet; it is still uttered as an aspiration or as an occlusive in some eastern varieties, depending on the dialect (cf. variants *hau*, *gau*, *kau* 'this', *kartan* 'in that'…)

As for the forms we will be dealing with in this paper, plurals have another variant with more phonetic material at their leftmost side, like *haek, haen, haetan, haetatik, haetara* together with the ones in Table 1. The only singular form that will be at stake in the following discussion will be the locative: *hartan* is the current form of the distal demonstrative in its locative form, but there is an adverb *han* 'there' that has been said to be the ancient locative form of *ha* 'that', being *–n* the locative case (Lafon 1999[1970]: 168).

The next three tables will be devoted to the declension of nouns: -e, -i, -o, -u ending nouns, *–a* ending nouns and consonant ending nouns. I will make clear which aspect of each paradigm is relevant for the discussion after presenting the tables:

Table 2. Declension of -*e, -i, -o, -u* ending nouns. *Mendi* 'mountain'

	SING.	PL.	
Absolutive	mendi-a	mendi-a-k	'the mountain/-s'
Ergative	mendi-a-k	mendi-ek	'the mountain/-s'
Genitive	mendi-a-ren	mendi-en	'of the mountain/-s'
Locative	mendi-a-n	mendi-eta-n	'in the mountain/-s'
Ablative	mendi-tik	mendi-eta-tik	'from the mountain/-s'
Adlative	mendi-ra	mendi-eta-ra	'to the mountain/-s'

In these nouns no remarkable irregularity is found, so they can be useful as a presentation of what we are going to deal with. I have enclosed the locative singular in a box on the one side, ergative and genitive plurals in another, and plural local cases in a third one; these groupings reflect three main problems addressed in the literature dealing with the diachrony of nominal declension.

Table 3. Definite declension of –*a* ending nouns. *Ola* 'forge'

	SING.	PL.	
Absolutive	ole-a	ola-k	'the forge / the forges'
Ergative	ole-a-k	ol-ek	'the forge / the forges'
Genitive	ole-a-ren	ol-en	'of the forge / of the forges'
Locative	ola-n	ol-eta-n	'in the forge / in the forges'
Ablative	ola-tik	ol-eta-tik	'from the forge / -s'
Adlative	ola-ra	ol-eta-ra	'to the forge / to the forges'

This table number 3 shows the behavior of western varieties of the language, where the final vowel of the stem, -*a*, is dissimilated in order to make clear the boundaries between stem and article, so they don't get fused. This dissimilation does not happen in the locative singular (nor in the absolutive plural, but I won't focus on this aspect this time).

Table 4. Definite declension of consonant ending nouns. *Lan* 'work'

	SING.	PL.	
Absolutive	lan-a	lan-a-k	'the work / the works'
Ergative	lan-a-k	lan-ek	'the work / the works'
Genitive	lan-a-ren	lan-en	'of the work / of the works'
Locative	lan-e-a-n	lan-eta-n	'in the work / in the works'
Ablative	lan-e-tik	lan-eta-tik	'from the work / -s'
Adlative	lan-e-ra	lan-eta-ra	'to the work / to the works'

Table 3 illustrates the behavior of the epenthetic vowel –*e*- that usually breaks a double consonant cluster; in the case of the adlative here, for example, it avoids clusters like –*nr*- in *lanera* 'to work', and keeps a CVCV syllable-string structure. Why it also appears in the locative case, *lanean* 'at work', where we apparently do not have two consonants getting together, is a puzzle that has deserved some attention in the literature. This is one of the problems I will address in section 3.

3. Basque declension: problems
        In the basic sketch drawn in the previous section, the paper's focal points have already been suggested. I will pay attention to locative singular, ergative and genitive plural and local plural cases; as for locative singular problems, Jacobsen

(1977), de Rijk (1981), Michelena (1981 [1987]), Trask (1997), Oñederra (2005) and Hualde (2005) are good examples of the attention it has attracted in the literature. Regarding ergative and genitive plurals, Lafon's (1935) and Michelena's (1990[1961]: 394) proposals (among others) remain the commonly accepted opinion. For local plural morphemes, Schuchardt's (1923) idea remains unchallenged, although with some contradictory opinions about it by Lafon (1949, 1970 [1999]) and Michelena (1961 [1990], 1971).

In this section I will offer an alternative proposal for all of them. I will also see how this new proposal fits, at least in diachronic terms, with the long-tradition idea of agglutinative patterns in Basque nominal declension.

In my "new" hypothesis I will defend that the WHOLE declension arose through further grammaticalization of the distal demonstratives; data supporting it will mostly come from dialectal variation and Middle Age documents.

3.1. Definite locative singular

As seen in tables 3 and 4, there are some slight deviations in the paradigm of words ending by consonant and those ending by –*a*. I will have a closer view to each of them, and see what they exactly consist of.

3.1.1. Definite locative singular –*an* 'in the' in consonant ending nouns

We have seen that adding the article –*a* and the locative marker –*n* to nouns like *mendi* 'mountain', table 2, shows no further complication: we would have *mendi-a-n* (*mendian* 'on the mountain'). But with words ending in a consonant, like *lan* 'work', we have *lan-e-a-n* 'in the work', not **lanan*.[2] Let's see how to solve this problem.

First, I will show that an agglutinative pattern does not help us to understand this deviation. Adding one by one, in some kind of agglutinative fashion, the morphemes to the stem *lan* 'work' does not result in the desired actual form of the locative singular definite phrase, see (4):

(4) a.   mendi + a = mendia   mendia + n = mendian
        mountain+the = the mountain   the+mountain+in='on the mountain'

b.   lan + a = lana (ABS)   lana + n = **lanan   (LOC)
     work + the = the workthe work + in = 'at work'

The actual form of 'in the work' is *lanean* in every Basque dialect. So it seems that this strict pattern of adding each one-function-bearing-morpheme does not explain the morphology of this kind of locative phrase. We need an explanation for this epenthetic –*e*-.

This problem has not gone unnoticed in the literature; since this epenthetic –*e*- appears between two consonants in the declension (cf. *lan* + *ra* 'work + to' = *lanera* 'to work', *lan* + *tik* 'work + to' = *lanetik* 'from work' in table 4), it has been proposed that also the locative case bore once an initial consonant, see (5).

(5)   a. Ablative: lan-e-tik   'from work' $\_C^{\#} + {}^{\#}C\_ \rightarrow \_C$ -e- $C\_$
         b. Locative: *lan-e-?an   <   *lan-e-Can

Thus, this proposal points out the need of reconstructing an initial consonant for the locative case. This consonant has usually been said to be [g] (de Rijk 1981, Jacobsen 1977, Trask 1997), but see some reasonable doubts raised by Oñederra (2005) and Hualde's non-committal position (2005).

This hypothesis can be summarized in three ideas:

· [g] is the mysterious consonant, since we also find it in the animate locative case (cf. animates: *Pedro-gan* 'in Pedro');

· Thus, -*gan* is the old locative, equal for animates and inanimates;

· The -*a*- in the singular locative (*mendian*, *lanean*…) has no article origin, since it would just be the remains of a former –*gan*, whose initial consonant was dropped between vowels (VgV > VØV), a common phonetic loss in contemporary Basque).

This hypothesis has several problems:

· What happens with place names? If the locative case is –*gan*, we would not expect things like *Oslon* 'in Oslo', but rather **Osloan < *Oslogan, which, as indicated by the asterisks, simply does not exist in Basque.

· What about some nouns in Eastern varieties (and some older texts of other parts of the Basque speaking area), where we find alternations like *etxen* (*etxe* 'house') 'at home' vs. *etxean* 'in the house'?

· Why is this -*g*- not dropped equally in every noun, be it animate or inanimate? For instance: *etxe-Øan* but **ama-Øan* (*ama* 'mother') 'in mother' (actual form *amagan*).

De Rijk and Trask don't offer any convincing and comprehensive solutions for these problems; as for the third problem in the listing, they don't even mention it.

My proposal at this point of the discussion will be that the consonant triggering the epenthetic –*e*- in locative singular is [h], or at least the same sound we find as the initial consonant of demonstratives (see the comments on table 1 above for the character of this initial consonant of demonstratives). For the sake of convenience, I will keep on using the *h* graph for it. So for the diachrony of the locative definite singular we would have something like (6):

(6)   *lan   han   >*lan-e-han   >   lane-an
        work in.that   'in that work'   work-in.the   'in the work'

So here again we have a further example of a grammaticalizing demonstrative, in this case an already inflected (locative cased) demonstrative.[3]

A problem for the claim I am making here may be the following: what about absolutive definite singular phrases, where no epenthesis appears? See (7b):

(7)   a. *lan ha   >   lanha[4] >   lan-a
           work that   'that work'   work-the   'the work'

        b. *lan ha   >   ** lan-e-ha > **lane-a
           work that   'that work'   work-the   'the work'

The final stage of the development in (7a) is what we actually have in Basque; the result in (7b) is ungrammatical. The question would be: why don't we have any epenthesis here? An answer for the differences between absolutive and locative definite phrases has already been given by Michelena (1987[1981]: 48-49), although at that moment he had in mind –*a* ending noun examples: he suggests that absolutives attached to the noun earlier than locatives (and plurals), and this difference in time would explain some differences in their respective behaviors.

I don't think, as Hualde (2005: 301-302) following Michelena seems to do, that we should always stick to relative chronologies proposed for dissimilation rules in order to explain differences between different cases; one could think that this could be not only a phonetic issue, but that morphology also plays an important role in the development of dissimilation rules. A good example could be that of some central varieties, where dissimilation is completely ruled out from declension, except when the article –*a* is used not strictly as a definite article, but as a resultative marker, like in *aterea* (*atera* 'go out') 'gone out', *botea* (*bota* 'throw') 'thrown'. These varieties would still have *ola*, not *olea* 'the forge'. Here it seems that dissimilation is determined by, and tightly connected to the morphological value of –*a*.

Having said this, another possible answer is that both demonstratives, the absolutive *ha* 'that' and the locative *han* 'in that' simply followed different grammaticalization paths; thus, we do not really need to explain both on the same grounds. This question, anyway, remains open.

A further "problem" for this proposal can be the following: as illustrated in (6-7), we have taken for granted that *han* is the locative form of the demonstrative, thus meaning 'in that'. But that is not exactly true: in

contemporary Basque 'in that' is expressed by *hartan*, and *han* means 'there'. My proposal, then, would imply that *hartan* is a newer form, and that *han* is the old form for 'in that', later relegated to the adverbial function 'there'. This is not a new idea: Lafon (1999 [1970]: 168) already mentions it, as I said while commenting table 1 above. Moreover, there are clear parallels in other languages showing that this kind of development from an inflected demonstrative to an adverb is quite common; see (8), for an adverb of the Ngiyambaa language (Diessel 1999: 8-9):

(8)   na-ni   'there'
        that-LOC

3.1.2. Definite locative singular –*an* 'in the' in -*a* ending nouns

Let's do the same exercise as in the previous section in example (4); I will add one by one the morphemes to the –*a* ending stem, and see what happens:

(9)   a. ola + a = olea   olea + n = **olean
        forge + the = the forge   the forge + in = 'in the forge'

As seen in table 3, we have the absolute form *olea* 'the forge', but we don't have **olean*, that would result from adding the locative –*n* to the absolutive definite form; instead, we have *olan* 'in the forge', with old forms parallel to *olaan*.

Now, let's see from a diachronic point of view what could have happened if we just added the whole inflected locative demonstrative to the –*a* ending stem:

(10)   *ola   han   > *olahan > olaan > olan
        forge   in.that 'in that forge' forge-in.the   'in the forge'

We have the desired result *olan* 'in the forge'. So again, not building the locative definite singular phrases morpheme by morpheme, each with its single meaning, but adding a cluster of morphemes bearing as a whole more than one meaning (demonstrative + case), we end up with the required form.

3.1.3. Problems and new research paths raised by this hypothesis

The hypothesis sketched in this section raises many new questions and problems, like how the grammaticalization of demonstratives happened exactly and the problems mentioned in 3.1.1. Other needs in the literature about Basque diachrony surface, like an in-depth analysis of the motivation for epenthesis: it

would seem that different factors, such as morphology, phonetics and syllable structure play a role in this issue.

Moreover, we can also notice (although it is not dealt with in this paper) that the absolutive plural and locative don't always go together: their morphology match in *–a* ending nouns (*olaan > olan* 'in the forge' and *olaak > olak* 'the forges') but not in nouns ending in a consonant (*lanean* 'in the work' but *lanak* 'the works', not **laneak). I believe that these problems should be handled together with the accentual patterns observed for the declension; the path drawn by Hualde (2005) can be a good starting point, even though I do not completely share his opinions.

All these issues and many more remain for further research, as a reminder of how many details we have not solved yet.

3.2. Local plural cases. The *–eta-* morpheme

The main local plural cases are the three appearing in tables 2 to 4, locative, ablative and adlative. When referring to them in examples, I will only use the locative one, *-etan* 'in the [PL]', for illustrative purposes; I believe that my approach is valid for the three of them (and most surely for instrumental *–ez*, and the so called relational *–etako*, which I am not explicitly treating here).

Let's, again, follow the same method as in section 3.1. to test the "agglutinativity" of these plural cases; let's build a plural definite locative phrase adding morpheme by morpheme, single meaning by single meaning:

(11) 1. mendi + a = mendia
mountain+the = the mountain

2. mendia + k = mendiak[5]
the mountain+s = the mountains

3. mendiak + n = **mendiak(e)n
the mountains+in = in the mountains

The third step in (11) shows us that we don't get the desired result. Instead of something like ***mendiak(e)n*, we have *mendietan* 'in the mountains'. The question arises: what is this *–eta-* morpheme? It has been identified with the *–eta* of place names like *Mendieta* 'place of mountains', *Arrieta* 'place of stones', from *harri* 'stone'. Michelena (1971) offers a comprehensive list of the similarities in behavior of *–eta* both in the declension and as place name marker, so no doubt remains about the same origin for both of them.

The usually assumed hypothesis for the origin of this morpheme is Schuchardt's (1923): according to him, this morpheme is of Latin origin, from the

collective marker *–eta*, plural of *–etum*, which can be found in Spanish place names such as *Alam-eda* 'poplar grove', from *Álamo* 'poplar', with voicing of the intervocalic voiceless stop. This proposal implies that, as a borrowing, it first spread in Basque in place names, and then its use was extended to the declension.

Lafon and Michelena accepted as probable this Latin origin (1970 and 1971 respectively), but at the beginning they both had expressed their doubts about it (1949 and 1961 respectively). I think this hypothesis leaves many obscure points unexplained; among others, the following:

· It seems that such morphological items are not usually borrowed (Weinreich 1953: 31)

· If it indeed was borrowed, they still don't show how it spread exactly (but see Castaños 1979: 52).

· It is not so self-evident to me why we should have the plural of a collective suffix with this function.

As main obscure points that will be leading the discussion in favor of a new hypothesis, I would ask:

· Why *-eta-* bearing phrases in the declension are DEFINITE?

· How to account for the *–heta* variant in Middle Age documents?

· How can we explain the variant *–keta* after sibilant?

My alternative proposal, of course, will proceed along the same lines as the solution provided for locative definite singular phrases: we are again dealing with grammaticalized demonstratives, which were "attached" to the noun they modified as fully inflected demonstratives:

(12)   mendi hetan   >   mendietan
        mountain in.those 'in those mountains'   in the mountains

A demonstrative origin offers us a straightforward explanation for the first question, the one wondering about the inherent definiteness of these expressions. I will now use data coming from medieval documents and from synchronic dialectal variation to support the hypothesis of a demonstrative origin for *–eta-*. This, I believe, will help us answering the questions I raised, as well as understanding the exact relationship between place names and declension, explaining how this morpheme spread over these different constructions.

3.2.1. *–eta* in Middle Age place names. The archaic variant *-heta*

There is a document dating 1025, part of a collection of documents from the late XIIth century called Becerro Galicano of San Millán. This document contains a huge amount of place names of the province of Araba, in the south

western Basque Country; it shows quite an archaic stage of the language (Michelena 1990 [1964]: 29), crucially still showing instances of the aspiration, which has nowadays disappeared in western Basque dialects. I will here illustrate some of them (13a), together with others found in the same Becerro Galicano of San Millán (13b):

(13)   a. Sansoheta, Sagassaheta, Erroheta, Azazaheta (1025).
        b. Beguheta (952), Sagarzaheta (1089), Hareizelheta (1106), Larrinhetago (1129).

In all these instances of the suffix *–eta* we see that it is actually *–heta*. These instances of the suffix make the relationship between it and the demonstratives much closer. At the same time, taking for granted through the aforementioned medieval instances, that the suffix had an initial sound, allows us to approach the *–keta* variant in a much more convincing way; Schuchardt's hypothesis does not explain properly how from Latin *–eta* evolves into Basque *-keta*. It all makes us wonder about the nature of the initial sound of demonstratives, and brings these instances of demonstratives, the oldest attested ones, back into the discussion dealing with that sound.

According to this "new" hypothesis I am claiming here, this suffix does not, of course, spread from place nouns to declension, but the other way round. This direction of spreading is already suggested by Azkue (1927, 1928), although he does not make any link between the suffix and the demonstratives. How did this happen exactly? That is what I am explaining now.

There is a well-known reanalysis process in Basque by which some locative singular phrases become some sort of absolute place names. I will illustrate that with examples. I will use the word *ibar* 'valley'; remember that *–n* is the locative case:

(14)   a.   ibarr-a (ABS)   b.   ibarr-ean   (LOC)
             valley-the   valley-in.the

There is a place name called *Ibarrea* near Altsasu, in Navarre. What seems to have happened here is that everything to the left of the case marker (locative *–n*, in this example) was reanalyzed as the place name, so the *–e-*, epenthetic in origin, was included in the newly reanalyzed absolutive form of the place name. We find the model parallel to this reanalysis process in the relationship between locative and absolutive forms of other place names, like Canada: in *Kanadan* 'in Canada' everything to the left of *–n* would be the non-locative form of the place name, *Kanada*. This is also what has happened with place names as *Parise* 'Paris', from locative forms such as *Parisen*, but this time keeping some traces of

the morphology of locative phrases (again the epenthetic vowel breaking the two consonant cluster). It is worth recalling that place names are typically and most frequently used in local cases

Another well-known example of this kind of reanalysis regards some oikonyms, or house names, with the suffix *–enea*. Let's take the proper name, of Romance origin, *Errando*; and let's recall there are last names, of oikonym origin, like *Errandoenea*. What's the exact morphological relationship between these two forms?

(15)   a.Errando-ren-a   (ABS) b.   Errando-ren-ean   (LOC)
        Errando-of-the   Errando-of-the.in

The instance in (15a) would mean something like 'the house of Errando', with elided 'house', something that in neighboring Romances could be said 'celle d'Errando' or 'la de Errando'. In (15b) we have 'in the house of Errando'; following the same reanalysis process depicted for example in (14) we get, with no complication, *Errandonea* (assuming loss of intervocalic *–r-*, a common phonetic rule).

So now, what happened to place names like those in (13)? Very simple: again, everything to the left of the locative case was reinterpreted as a noun in the absolute, a name denoting some plurality notion (16b):

(16)   a.   bago hetan   >   bagoetan   b. Bagoeta-n
                beech in.those   in the beeches The Beeches-in

We see, thus, that this *–eta* of place names can be easily explained simply appealing to a well known reanalysis process already proposed (and still alive in the language) for some other instances of singular local cases of the declension.

3.2.2. Eastern dialects' accent pattern
The Eastern accent pattern, as Hualde calls it (1997: 74), is mainly [-2], the accent falls on the penultimate syllable. Look at these examples:

(17)   étxe   etxí-a   gízun   gizún-a
        house   house-the   man   man-the

There are, nevertheless, some inflected forms that don't follow this pattern. They are treated under the heading of "other accent patterns" in Hualde's work (1997: 80), when he deals with the graphic accent used by a Zuberoan writer of the XIX century:

(18)   zeli-étaco   herrou-étara   falxi-étaric
        heaven-of.the   root-to.the   false-from.the

I think in fact, that these should not be dealt with as exceptions, not at least when looking at them from a diachronic point of view: they just keep the accent of the demonstratives *hétaco* 'of those', *hétara* 'to those' and *hétaric* 'from those'. What we really have (again from a diachronic point of view) is that they are not [-3], but [+1], counting from the beginning of the declensional suffix. Their accent can be easily explained and parallels that of demonstratives. In the next subsection we will see further examples of this.

3.3. Ergative and genitive plural

Some problems posed by these two cases, *–ek* (ERG.PL) and *–en* (GEN.PL), see tables 2-4, have been solved proposing a solution driven by agglutination. The two main problems treated in the literature regarding these two plural cases have to do with the accent pattern of eastern dialects (they are [-1] and not [-2]) on the one side, and the different vowel they have in western dialects (they are *–ak* and *–an*) on the other. The solution for these "deviations" came from proposing the following diachronic evolution of the forms (Lafon 1935, Michelena 1961 [1990]):

(19)   a. *mendi-ag-e-k   >   *mendiaek   >   mendiek
        mountain-PL-epenth-ERG

        b.*mendi-ag-en   >   *mendiaen   >   mendien
        mountain-PL-GEN

We can see that on the basis of this proposal lies an agglutinative conception of the declension: first we add the plural (*–ag*) and then the case marker (*–k* and *–en* (?)). In this way, those authors suggest a solution for the aforementioned two problems: first, since the current form is a phonetic reduction of the original one, we can still maintain the [-2] general accent pattern of eastern dialects (*mendiág-e-k* would be [-2]). The western alternation of the vowel (*mendiak* instead of *mendiek*) can be easily explained by protoforms such as **mendiaek*.

I see, however, some problems for this proposal:

I don't see which exactly the agglutination pattern in (19b) is. What is *–en*? Is that the genitive? Isn't *–e-* an epenthetic vowel, like in the ergative (19a)? In that case, what is *–n*?

· Why do we find an aspiration in Middle Age superlatives, *-hen*?

· Why do we have a *–ken* variant in the superlative *azken* 'last'?

My alternative proposal maintains that we are dealing with grammaticalized demonstratives, which were "attached" to the noun they modified as fully inflected demonstratives:

(20)   a. mendi   hek   >   mendiek
         mountain those 'those mountains'   the mountains

       b. mendi hen   >   mendien
         mountain those.of 'of those mountains'   of the mountains

As in (12), there is not even the need to put an asterisk in these instances, since that is exactly how demonstrative bearing phrases are uttered nowadays in some eastern dialects.

3.3.1. Middle Age superlatives: *-hen*

Basque superlative *–en* (like in *handi* 'big', *handien* 'biggest'), is widely assumed to be a specialization of the genitive (Trask 1997: 210), and I would more specifically say of the genitive plural. Plural ablatives and genitives appear in superlative constructions such as Latin *altissimus arboribus* (ABL.PL) or *altissimus arborum* (GEN.PL) 'the biggest tree, the biggest of / from the trees', so there we find a legitimate parallel to Basque genitive plural/superlative *–en*. The identity between the two Basque morphemes is total.

In the Middle Age we find some place names bearing a superlative, place names meaning "the highest place" or "the lowest place". In the same aforementioned document of 1025, collected in the Becerro Galicano of San Millán of the late XIIth century, these superlatives show the following shape:

(21)   Arbelgoihen 1025 (and maybe Goiahen 1025)

This *Arbel-goi-hen* is very easily analyzed through contemporary Basque morphology: there we have *arbel* 'slate' and *goi* 'up', and *goihen* is easily translated as 'upmost'. Well, the interesting point here again is that, the same as we have seen for local cases in section 3.2., there is a graphic *h* at the beginning of the superlative marker: I think this fact by itself supports what I have proposed in (20b).

There is a further interesting fact in the Basque language worth bringing to discussion: *azken* 'last' is usually viewed as a superlative (Azkue 1923: 28, Michelena 1961 [1990]: 219), although no detailed account for it has been given as far as I know. Now, if we keep in mind the initial consonant of the superlative marker in (21), taking it as a demonstrative, and compare it to the alternation shown in other demonstratives, namely *–heta* / *–keta* explained above in 3.2., it

becomes clear that the alternation *–hen / –ken* shares the same complementary distribution: after an affricate, from *Ametz* 'oak' we have *Amezketa* (a town in Gipuzkoa), and from *atz(e)* 'back' we have *azken*, let's say "backest", 'last'. All this points in one direction: these superlatives / genitive plurals are grammaticalized demonstratives.

3.3.2. Eastern dialects' accent pattern
As suggested above, the instances in (20), *mendiék* and *mendién*, bear a [-1] stress in eastern dialects, where the [-2] accent pattern is general. I think this exception can be explained not in terms of contraction, as illustrated in (19), but following the same reasoning we followed for (18) in section 3.2.2.: the stress remains in the same position that was formerly borne by the demonstrative. Strictly speaking, in diachronic terms, they are not instances of [-1] stress pattern, but rather show a [+1] stress pattern, counting from the beginning of the suffix:

(22)   a.   mendi hék   >   mendiék
       b.   mendi hén   >   mendién

Of course, since the demonstratives *hek* and *hen* are monosyllabic, the stress inevitably falls on that single syllable.
The interesting point of this analysis is that we have a unified account for two different kinds of exceptions: [-3] stress patterns in (18) and [-1] stress patterns here; now they all are [+1] if we know where to start counting from. Thus, each one by itself receives a proper analysis, but from an overall point of view their respective analyses strengthen each other's.
As minor and maybe weaker evidence, we have such [-1] stress patterns for genitive and ergative plurals in dialects other than Zuberoan (eastern Basque), where no [-2] general stress pattern holds. I am thinking of graphic accentuation in Leizarraga's works, so looking at these accents marks one may wonder on which grounds can such a proposal stand, when it is built on the basis of other dialects, which are really [-2] stress pattern bearing dialects.

3.4. Summary and implications of this proposal
I will give in table 5 a summary of the diachronic path I am proposing for the development of part of the declension:

Table 5. Relationship between demonstratives and declension. A diachronic proposal[6]

		DEMONSTRATIVES	DECLENSION		
LOC SG	*han	*mendihan		>	mendian
ERG PL	hek	*mendihek		>	mendiek
GEN PL	hen	*mendihen		>	mendien
LOC PL	hetan	*mendihetan		>	mendietan
ABL PL	hetatik	*mendihetatik		>	mendietatik
ADL PL	hetara	*mendihetara		>	mendietara

I will now list some of the implications of such a proposal for the diachrony of declension:

· We may better approach some traditional exceptions of the declension, such as eastern article bearing adlatives (Lafon 1970), like eastern *mendi-a-ra* mountain-the-to 'to the mountain' versus standard *mendira* 'to the mountain'.

· We may start wondering about the nature of western old plural genitives (and maybe ergatives) in *–an*, vs. standard *–en*. Remember that there are *–aen* superlatives and probably plural genitives in old western Basque (Castaños Garay 1979: 135).

· Closely related to the preceding question, we should start reconstructing the demonstratives (cf. *haen* vs. *hen*), and start thinking when this alleged restructuring of the demonstratives happened, since it seems that we find such alternation even in declension (cf., again, what we have mentioned in the precedent paragraph for old western Basque). Of course, my assumption during this paper has been that *hen* like forms are older than *haen* like forms.

· This proposal helps us understand some aspects of declension's accentual pattern, and put together eastern and western dialects, since from Hualde's work we know western plural affixes behave more like clitics rather than fully attached and grammaticalized suffixes; this helps understand why in eastern dialects they also keep the original stress pattern of the demonstratives.

· In a more speculative mood, we could also wonder about the nature of ergative marking, at least in the plural, and what role demonstratives played in this respect, or how was ergativity encoded in plural demonstratives, and how was this distinction, if it really existed, "transported" into the declension. The traditional proposal in (19a) comes from an assumption in which every dialect made a distinction for ergative everywhere, in the plural as well as in the singular, but I am not sure whether such a structuralist view has to be kept.

4.- Agglutination and Basque nominal morphology. Last remarks.

Of course, I've been looking at the problems here through the lens of diachrony; my proposals here have no meaning regarding the agglutinative

character of Basque from a synchronic or typological perspective. But, as we have seen throughout this paper, there are some questions worth raising based on the diachronic development of nominal morphology; agglutination (at least a strict view of it) does not seem to have played a basic role in its evolution.

Inflected demonstratives as a whole were grammaticalized and attached to the noun phrase, so these new morphemes actually bore more than one meaning, let's say definiteness, whatever it might be, plural / singular distinction and case. This non-strict agglutinative diachronic pattern allows for an explanation of why we have problems identifying and distinguishing "morphemes" like *-e-* and *-ta-* in plurals.

It is true, however, that the current nominal declension may reflect some kind of agglutinative pattern in its morphology. The question a historical linguist would be asking is where does that come from: maybe from an older stage of the language, where demonstratives were built in such fashion. Or maybe we shouldn't really ask such questions, since they would possibly imply that we are looking for "things" that don't have any real status in our language in particular and in language theory in general.

Whatever the case might be, I believe it is much more interesting to know how exactly the morphology of a language evolved, rather than labeling it as such-and-such language type.

Acknowledgements

Notes

[1] ABS = absolute, ERG = ergative, GEN = genitive, LOC = locative, ABL = ablativo, ADL = adlative, SING = singular, PL = plural, DEF = definite.

[2] Double asterisk (**) indicates ungrammaticality. Single asterisk (*) indicates reconstructed form.

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[3] This non-agglutinative diachronic pattern was already claimed for locative definite singular phrases in Manterola (2006: 666-673). Although that paper makes some doubtful claims as for the implications entailed by such an explanation, the basics of the approach, I believe, remains valid.

[4] I don't add an asterisk here, since we have attested instances like *Udalha*, *Aialha*, in a document dated 1025; see Manterola (2006: 674) for further information.

[5] Here I am assuming that *–k* is the Basque plural marker, as *–s* can be in English or Spanish; but the fact from the point of view of synchronic description is that *–k*, by itself, cannot appear as a marker of plurality: it always goes together with *–a*, the definite article. This would mean, again, that a morpheme that cannot be split (*-ak*) bears more than one meaning.

[6] Glosses can be found in previous tables.

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