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## **From free relatives to indefinite pronouns in Basque, or how can anyone end up being someone**

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*Abstract: After a short introduction to wh-based quantification in Basque, I will address a particular case of historically derived quantification. I will show that Basque existential indefinite pronouns have their origin in correlative protases. I will first present the available dialectal and historical record and claim that the existing variation can be accounted for if the proforms have their source in the protasis of correlative constructions. I discuss next the possible course of diachronic events, by trying to establish the successive steps in the light of the existing gaps in the paradigm of attested forms.*

### **1. Wh-based Quantifiers in Basque**

As noted by Haspelmath in his chapter on Indefinite Pronouns in the World Atlas of Language Structures (2009), as well as in earlier work (1997), indefinite pronouns like “somebody” and “something” come in two major types: on the one hand they may be related to interrogative pronouns, in such a way that a systematic link between interrogative pronouns and indefinite ones can be sustained; on the other hand, they may be related to generic nouns like “person” or “thing”. Other systems either constitute a mixed type between the two options, or they dispense with indefinite pronouns entirely, employing a more indirect strategy to reach a semantic equivalent, like existential constructions.

Basque has a relatively rich system of quantificational expressions based on “indeterminate pronouns” (Kuroda, 1968): indefinite bases formally identical to wh-words. Consider the following table:

(1)

	Wh-words	Existential	Polarity	Free-Choice <sub>1</sub>	Free-Choice <sub>2</sub>
		“Someone”	“Anyone”	“Anyone”	“Anyone”

WHO	<i>nor</i>	<i>nor-bait</i>	<i>i- nor</i>	<i>edo-nor</i>	<i>nor-nahi</i>
WHICH	<i>zein</i>	-----	-----	<i>edo-zein</i>	<i>zein-nahi</i>
WHAT	<i>zer</i>	<i>zer-bait</i>	<i>e-zer</i>	<i>edo-zer</i>	<i>zer-nahi</i>
WHERE	<i>non</i>	<i>non-bait</i>	<i>i-non</i>	<i>edo-non</i>	<i>non-nahi</i>
WHEN	<i>noiz</i>	<i>noiz-bait</i>	<i>i-noiz</i>	<i>edo-noiz</i>	<i>noiz-nahi</i>
HOW	<i>nola</i>	<i>nola-bait</i>	<i>i-nola</i>	<i>edo-nola</i>	<i>nola-nahi</i>

The table in (1) constitutes a limited sample of the complex quantifiers that can be built in Basque by the combination of an “indeterminate pronoun”, formally identical to interrogative pronouns, and something else. The indeterminate pronouns are identified in the first column, and they are built on either an *n-* or *z-* prefix, and a bound remnant that conveys the substantial range of the pronoun: person, location, time, thing. The *n-/z-* divide can be understood as a way to distinguish things (cf. *z-er* “what”) from everything else. The form *zein* “which”, very probably a genitive form of *zer* “what” originally (*zein*<*zer-en* “of what”, Mitxelena 1985:66), is the D-linked counterpart of *zer* “what”, and it can be used in present-day Basque to refer to persons. In some varieties, it has replaced *nor* “who” in informal usage (see De Rijk, 2008).

Indeterminate pronouns combine with prefixes to form polarity items (the *i-/e-* series in the fourth column), similar in their distribution to the English polarity *any* series (see Etxepare, 2003), and free-choice pronouns (the *edo-* series in the fifth column). The prefix that characterizes polarity items has been claimed to be related to the negation particle *ez* “not” in Basque. The idea is that the prefix is a shortened form of negation, an idea due originally to Azkue (see Agud and Tovar, 1991:814): something like *ez* “not”+*zer* “what” would have resulted in a segmentally shortened form like *ezer* “anything”. This hypothesis may look plausible from the standpoint of present-day *e-/i-* forms, whose distribution is that of polarity items of the non-veridical sort (Giannakidou, 1997; Etxepare, 2003), licensed, among other contexts, by negation. But as we will see, it does not fare well if we go back in time: the distribution of *e-/i-* forms in the earliest texts is not

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exactly that of a polarity item of the non-veridical sort, and seems to take up some of the semantic values associated in present-day Basque to the *nor bait* “someone” series. I will come back to this at the end of this work.

Indeterminate pronouns combine with the prefix *edo-* to form free-choice pronouns. The prefix *edo-* is identical in form to the disjunction *edo* “or” as in (2):

- (2) a. Xabier edo Miren  
Xabier or Miren  
b. Edo-nor  
DISJ-who  
“Anyone”

The distribution of the *edo*-series is constrained by the usual conditions on the distribution of free choice items. Thus, *edo*-forms in present-day Basque can only occur in non-episodic contexts (Giannakidou, 1997). Consider the following two illustrative examples, which involve a modal auxiliary (3a), and a verbal predicate headed by the imperfective suffix (3b), and conveying frequentative aspect. (3c), in which the *edo*-form occurs in a perfective verbal predicate, is ungrammatical.

- (3) a. Edozeinek egin dezake  
or.which do can  
“Anyone can do it”  
b. Edozein gonbidatzen dute gaur egunean  
or.which invite.NOM.LOC they.have these days  
“They invite anyone these days”  
c. \*Edozein etorri zen  
or.which come he.had  
“\*Anyone came”

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Indeterminate pronouns can also combine with suffixes. A case in point is the second free-choice series *nornahi* “wh-want” (column 6). *Nahi* can be either a noun “wish”, or a verbal predicate “want”. In Basque, modal predicates expressing volition or necessity are denominal: they are based on the lexical nouns *nahi* “wish” and *behar* “need” (see Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria, 2012, and Balza, 2018, for extensive discussion). (4a,b) illustrates the nominal use of *nahi* and *behar*. (5a,b), their verbal use. In (4a,b), *nahi* and *behar* are headed by a determiner, and they select a nominalized clause headed by the genitive suffix *-ko*. *-ko* headed nominalizations convey prospective aspect in Basque.

- (4) a. Hori egiteko nahia  
that do.NOM.PROSP wish.DET  
“The wish to do that”
- b. Hori egiteko beharra  
that do.NOM.PROSP need.DET  
“The need to do that”

In their verbal uses, *nahi* and *behar* are unmarked for aspect and they are adjacent to the inflected verb, as all verbal forms in Basque. The modal predicate selects a participial verbal form, that has been compared to Romance infinitivals (see Haddican and Tsoulas, 2012; Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria, 2012

- (5) a. Hori egin nahi du  
that do.INF want he.has  
“He wants to do that”
- b. Hori egin behar du  
that do.INF need he.has  
“He needs to/has to do that”

The free-choice series based on *nahi* “want” is derived from the grammaticalization of an impersonal free relative (cf. Latin *qui-libet*, Spanish



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–*nahi* forms with different wh-words. Thus, *edo*-forms combine with the wh-word *nor* “who” and *zer* “what” only in western varieties, but not in Eastern ones (see the entries *edozein* and *edozer* in the Basque General Dictionary). The *edo*-strategy is mostly used with the wh-word *zein* “which” in Eastern dialects (*edozein* “anyone”) together with its corresponding –*nahi* form, *zeinahi* (<*zein+nahi*). *Edo*-forms on the other hand are not free-choice items in all dialects and times. Some of the XVIth and XVIIth century texts attest to the existential interpretation of *edo*-forms, sometimes headed by the determiner *bat* “a”, as in (8) (from Leizarraga’s translation of the New Testament, 1571):

- (8) Zen bada Fariseuetarik edozein bat Nikodemo deitzen zenik  
was then pharisee.ABL edo.which a Nikodemo call.IMP was.REL.DET  
“There was thus someone among the Pharisees who was called Nikodemo”

We will come back to these uses of *edo*-forms at the end of this work. If we examine carefully the prefixed and the suffixed wh-based forms in the table in (1), we could formulate the following hypothesis:

- (9) All wh-based quantifiers involving suffixes have their origin in the grammaticalization of a clause

The generalization in (9) leads us to examine the rest of the suffixed forms (the –*bait* forms) as a potential further instance of grammaticalization from a clause.

## 2. Existential pronouns and the prefix *bait*-.

### 2.1. The interpretation of –*bait* indefinites

The last indefinite pronoun in the table is the one headed by –*bait*. The indefinite pronoun in this case is akin to epistemic indefinites of the *alguien* type in Spanish or the *irgendein* type in German (see Alonso-Ovalle and Menendez-Benito 2013 for an overview). Epistemic indefinites are indefinite pronouns or determiners that convey information about the speaker’s epistemic state. They are incompatible

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with a known reference for the speaker (Aloni and Port, 2006). This accounts for the fact that they disallow all continuations that express speaker knowledge about the referent of the indefinite pronoun:

(10) a. Norbait etorri da, #alegia Xabier  
someone come is, namely Xabier  
“Someone came, #namely Xabier”

b. Norbaitek deitu du. #Ezetz asmatu nork  
Someone.erg called has no.ptc guess who.erg  
“Someone called. #You won’t guess who”

The ignorance inference that arises from the use of the Basque epistemic indefinites is of the weak sort. That is, indefinites headed by *-bait* can be used in contexts that exclude at least some epistemic possibilities (Aloni and Port, 2006). The weak alternative interpretation of these indefinites can be shown by adapting the hide-and-seek context that Alonso Ovalle and Menendez-Benito provide as a pragmatic context for the felicitousness of *irgendein* indefinite determiners (Alonso Ovalle and Menendez-Benito, 2010). Consider (11):

(11) Context:

Miren, Jon and Peru are playing hide and seek in their country state. Jon is hiding. Peru believes that Jon is in the guesthouse, but not in the gardenhouse or the orangehouse.

In this scenario, Peru cannot truthfully utter (12), with a free-choice item, because not all the places in the country state are epistemic possibilities for him:

(12) #Jon edonon/nonnahi egon liteke (etxaldean)  
Jon anywhere/anywhere be can.EPISTM country.house.in  
“Jon might be anywhere in the countryhouse”



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On the other hand, the *-bait* indefinites are felicitous in this same context. The state of ignorance of the speaker who utters (13) is partial, one that allows the exclusion of some of the alternatives in the context:

- (13) Jon nonbait dago etxaldean  
Jon somewhere is country.house.in  
“Jon is somewhere in the country house”

The basic claim of this work is that indefinite *-bait* forms are originally free-choice items. The semantic bleaching process that leads to the present-day indefinites has to do therefore with the way in which the domain of alternatives is considered: from the standpoint of total ignorance in earlier stages of the language; and from the standpoint of partial ignorance in the actual epistemic indefinites.

## 2.2. What is *-bait*?

As noted repeatedly by Basque historical linguists and grammarians, *-bait* in the existential pronoun series is identical to the complementizer *-bait* in finite subordination (Azkue, 1925; Lafon, 1944, 1966; Trask, 1997; Michelena, 1970; Etxepare, 2001; Rebuschi, 2003). Azkue provides a very powerful argument for this connection, based on dialectal evidence (Azkue 1923:223):

- (14) “It is interesting to observe that when *bait-*, instead of being a conjunctive prefix [the complementizer] is a gradative suffix in a pronoun [the indefinite suffix], shows the very same morphological variants in each case, like *-baist* (Biscayan) and *-beit* (Souletin)”

In other words, the range of morphological variation we find in the exponence of the complementizer *-bait* is identical to the range of variation we find for the indefinite suffix *-bait*. In many cases, the different variants are also distributed in a correlated fashion. Thus, an eastern variant for the complementizer *-bait* is *-beit*, which is also a form one finds for the indefinite suffix in that same area:

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- (15) a. Nor ere jinen *beit*-a  
          who even com.PROSP COMP.IS  
          “Who ever will come”  
      b. Nor-*beit*  
          who SUF  
          “Someone”

In purely morphological terms, this is not a straightforward connection, in the sense that the morpheme *-beit* is a suffix in the case of indefinite pronouns, but a prefix on the finite verb in subordinate contexts, as shown in (15a). This asymmetry can be accounted for along the lines of the hypothesis in (9), as I will show in section 6.

### 2.3. The distribution of the complementizer *-beit*

As shown by Oyharçabal (1987) and more recently, Krajewska (2017), the marker *-beit* is found in a wide array of constructions. On the one hand (Krajewska, 2017: 307), *-beit* can be used together with adverbial conjunctions that express peripheral clausal modification (in the sense of Haegeman 2010, 2012), like causal modification, or since-clauses, as well as with *wh*-pronouns in correlative constructions, appositive headed relatives and free relatives. These uses of *-beit* are illustrated in (16) to (19), examples drawn from Krajewska (2017).

#### CAUSAL ADVERBIAL CLAUSE

- (16) Erraten da mortalea, zeren iltzen bait-u arima  
      say.IMP is mortal.DET because kill.IMP bait.AUX soul.DET  
      “‘It is said ‘mortal’, because it kills the soul” (Beriayn, Doctrina, 1626)

#### APPOSITIVE HEADED RELATIVE

- (17) Aitafamilia bat, zeinek landa bait zezan mahasti bat  
      Landowner one.abs who.ERG plant bait AUX vineyard a

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“A landowner, who planted a vineyard...” (Leizarraga, 1571)

CORRELATIVE

- (18) Nori ere pot eginen baitraukat, hura izanen da  
who.DAT even kiss do.PROSP bait.AUX that.one be. PROSP is  
“Whomever I will kiss, he is the one” (Leizarraga, 1571)

FREE RELATIVE

- (19) A: Nork dauka Jaungoikoa gure jauna, dela Jaungoiko egiaskoa?  
who.ERG treats God our lord, AUX.COMP God true.DET  
“Who treats God our Lord as the true God?”  
B: Nork adoratzten baitu hura bera Jaungoiko egiasko den bezala...  
who.ERG adore.IMP COMP.AUX that one God true BE.PRESENT.COMP LIKE  
“The one who adores him as the true god”

*-bait* can also be employed on its own, in which case it is ambiguous between uses that we would typically associate to subordination, and which are very much like the ones we have seen above, and uses which we would rather assign to discourse relations. (20) is an illustrative example of an appositive headed relative with the only presence of *-bait*. (21) provides a discourse-related use of *-bait*, in this case an emphatic use (both from Krajewska, 2017):

- (20) Badira zuhaitz batzuk, ...sasoinetik kanpoan hasten baitira loratzen  
there.are tree some season.from outside start.IMP BAIT.AUX blossom.IMP  
“There are some trees, that start to blossom outside of the season” (Ax. 1643)

- (21) Baina errak solamente hitza, eta sendaturen baita ene muthilla  
but say only word.DET and heal.PROSP BAIT.AUX my boy.DET  
“But say just a Word, and my boy will indeed be healed”

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Since we are interested in the possible source of the indefinite pronoun series, and the latter is built on the indeterminate pronoun paradigm, we can already exclude the independent uses of *-bait* from consideration, as they are characterized by the absence of any *wh*-word. For the same reason, adverbial uses of *-bait* are of little concern here. If we turn our attention to headed relatives and correlative constructions, we may notice an important asymmetry between the two. Headed relatives in Basque are constructed on the basis of a single *wh*-pronoun *zein* “which” (22). Other *wh*-words, like *non* “where”, *nola* “how” and *nor* “who”, are also attested, but they are much more rarely found (Oyharçabal, 1987, 2003). Thus, an animate subject whose interrogative *wh*-word would correspond to *nor* “who”, must be modified by a relative clause headed by *zein*, a multipurpose relative pronoun. Consider the following illustrative example:

(22) Ez da hain etxeko jaun ttipirik, (Duvoisin, 1868)  
NEG is such house.GEN lord small.PART

zeinak ez baitezake herts urthe batez larre phuska bat  
which.ERG NEG bait.can close year one.for land piece one

‘There is no landowner that cannot close a piece of land for one year’

An equivalent relative with *nor* “who” instead of *zein* is not possible in present-day Basque, and it is only exceptionnally attested in the Basque historical corpus:

(22) \*...nork ez baitezake herts...  
who.ERG NEG bait.can close  
“who cannot close”

This is not a restriction that one finds in correlative constructions, as illustrated by the following example from Etxepare (1545):

(23) Nik norgatik pena baitut, hark eztu ene axolik  
I.ERG who.for pain I.have that NEG.AUX my care.PART

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“(The person) for whom I’m pain, that one does not care about me”

Now consider the significance of this fact in the context of (9), repeated here:

(9) All *wh*-based quantifiers involving suffixes have their origin in the grammaticalization of a clause

If something like (9) is correct, and *-bait* clausal constructions constitute the grammatical source of the *-bait* pronominal series, then the indefinite existential pronouns cannot have their source in headed relatives. We need a diachronic source that will allow for the emergence of a full-fledged pronominal series, like the one in (1). Correlative protases provide the structural source that allows to account for the full indefinite pronoun paradigm.

### 3. Morphological variation in the existential pronoun series

In present day Basque, the sequence *wh-word+bait* cannot be separated by anything, and behaves for all purposes as a nominal base, to which case markers (25a-c) and other nominal inflectional morphology (a plural suffix, in 25d) can be added.

- (25) a. Norbait-ek            “someone”  
          who.BAIT.ERG
- b. Norbait-en            “someone’s”  
          who. BAIT.GEN
- c. Norbait-i             “to someone”  
          who. BAIT.DAT
- d. Norbait-tzu         “some people”  
          who. BAIT.PL

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The indefinite pronoun headed by *-bait* is also the nominal base for postpositional affixes:

- (26) a. Nonbait “somewhere”  
where.bait
- b. Nonbait-era “to somewhere”  
where.bait.to
- c. Nonbait-etik “from somewhere”  
where.abl.from
- d. Zerbait-etaz “about something”  
what.bait.about

The historical and dialectal records present rich morphological variation in the case of indefinite pronouns headed by the suffix *-bait*. This is unlike the prefix-based forms, which are much more stable in both time and space. Consider for instance the range of forms adopted by the free-choice pronoun *edozein* “anyone” and the one corresponding to the base *norbait* “someone”, both of general use in all dialects, in the dative case (the term *dialectal* makes reference to XXth century attestations in dialectal fieldwork or corpora):

- (27) a. Edonori “To anyone”  
b. disj.who.dat (Only form, historical/dialectal)
- (28) a. Norbaitzui “To some (plural)”  
b. who.bait.case *norbaiti* (Historical/Dialectal)  
who.case.bait *noribait* (Historical)  
who.num.case.bait *nortzuibait* (Historical)  
who.bait.num.case *norbaitzui* (Historical/Dialectal)

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who.num.case.even.bait	<i>nortzuierebait</i>	(Historical)
who.case.bait.case	<i>noribaiti</i>	(Historical)

Variation also includes the form of the suffix, which can be slightly different: *-baita*. In that case, only absolute headed wh-pronouns or postpositional pronouns are possible, but not case marked wh-pronouns:

(29)	a. who.bait.a	norbaita	(Dialectal/Historical)
	b. *who.case.bait.a		(Unattested)

Wh-indefinites can also include the scalar focus particle *ere* “also/even”, another potential element of variation. Wh-indefinites including *ere* are well attested in both the dialectal and the historical record (example from Mendiburu, 1760):

(30)	...bere seme Jesus nunerebait	ekusteko	nai	andiarekin...
	his son	Jesus	WHERE.FOC.BAIT	see.NOM.PROSP wish big.with
	“...with a great desire to see his son Jesus somewhere...”			

The variation manifested by the rich panoply of *-bait* indefinite forms can thus be classified according to three basic parameters: (i) the relative position of nominal morphology vis-à-vis *-bait*; (ii) the optional presence of a focal particle *ere* “also/even”; and (iii) the form of the suffix (*-baita*), which imposes restrictions in the case marking of the wh-pronouns themselves.

I will show that the attested variation can be elegantly explained away by assuming that indefinite pronouns have their origin in correlative constructions.

### **3.1 The position of Noun related morphology**

Let me start with the first parameter of variation, the one that corresponds to the relative position of nominal morphology. Noun related morphology in Basque involves case morphology, number morphology and D-morphology. The latter is

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absent from indefinite pronouns, and in general from all indeterminate pronoun based quantifiers, so I will not consider it here.

### 3.1.1. Morphological Case in between Wh-word and bait

Case morphology can occur in between the wh-word and the suffix. The basic sequence is the one in (31). I provide illustrative examples in (32) and (33).

(31) Wh-Case-Bait

(32) Nork bait-ere amoria niri daraut muthatu  
Who.ERG BAIT.EVEN love.DET me.DAT AUX.3SA.1SD.3SE changed  
“Someone has changed my beloved” (Etxepare, 1545)

(33) Bide batera irten (Mogel, end of XVIIIth century)  
Road one.ALL come

ta lapur batek kentzen badiozka nori bait eun ezkutu,...,  
and thief one.ERG steal.IMP if.AUX who.DAT bait one.hundred escudos

“If coming out at a road, a burglar steals 100 escudos from someone...”

The diachronic process involves a process of externalization of the nominal morphology (Haspelmath, 1993) to a position following the suffix:

(34) a. *nor-k-bait, nor-i-bait* -> *nor-bait-ek, nor-bait-i*  
b. wh.case.bait -> wh-bait-case

The externalization process has left also instances in which the case occurs two times: one in the wh-pronoun and another one at the end of the pronoun, witness the following example from the high-navarrese writer Lizarraga (1793):

(35) ...noribaiti perjuiziorik in badiot



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who.DAT.BAIT.DAT harm done cond.aux

“...if I did some harm to anyone...”

### 3.1.2. Plural inflection in between the Wh-word and bait

Wh-words do not admit inflectional number, but they do admit, in those dialects in which this is available, a derivational plural suffix *-tzu*. In those dialects, (36) is a possible morphological template. (37) and (38) provide two illustrative examples:

(36) Wh-word-Number-Bait-(Case)

(37) Eta berri au eman zioten Dabidi nor-tzuk-bait... (Uriarte, 1858)  
and news this give aux David.dat wh-pl-bait

“And some (people) gave the following news to David...”

(38) Jaungoikuak nortzuibait agertu edo errebelatu ez badautsee (Mogel, 1800)  
god.erg who.pl.dat.bait show or reveal neg if.aux

“...if God did not show or reveal that to some people”

As with case morphology, number morphology ends up being added after the suffix *-bait*:

(39) a. *nor-tzuk-bait, nor-tzui-bait* → *nor-bait-tzuk, nor-bait-tzu-i*  
b. *who.num.case.bait* → *who.bait.num.case*

### 3.1.3. Postpositional heads in between the wh-word and bait

In present-day Basque, postpositional phrases are typically added after the suffix *-bait*. The historical record and the actual dialectal record nevertheless attest to other possible forms, which follow the pattern in (40), as in (41a-e):

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(40) Wh-PostP-Bait

(41) a. Norabait “to somewhere”

Where.all.bait (cf. 10b)

b. Zertazbait “about something” (Azkue, Roncalese)

What.about.bait (cf. 10d)

c. Zetanbait “in something” (Azkue, Mañaria)

what.loc.bait

d. Nolakoabait “of some form” (Azkue, High Navarrese, Low N., G., L.)

how.gen.det.bait

e. Zergatikbait “for some reason” (Juan Bautista Agirre, 1850, G.)

what.because.bait

The familiar process of externalization has also applied here:

(42) a. *no-ra-bait, zer-taz-bait* -> *non-bait-era, zer-bait-etaz*

b. *wh.postp.bait*-> *wh.bait.postp*

### **3.2. Focal particles in between the wh-word and bait**

The second parameter of variation has to do with the presence of focal particles inside the indefinite pronoun. Basque has a particle *ere*, which has either an additive “also” or a focal/scalar meaning, akin to *even* in English (see recently Etxeberria and Irurtzun, 2015). The two values are triggered in relation to the discourse status of the preceding phrase. Simplifying: if it is a topic, then *ere* takes an additive value; if it is in focus, then *ere* can be interpreted as a scalar particle.

(43) a. Jon ere etorri da

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Jon.abs ptc come is  
“Jon too has come“

b. JON ere etorri da  
Jon.abs ptc come is  
“JON too has come“ / “Even JON has come“

The particle occurs in many indefinite pronoun forms both in the historical and the dialectal records:

(44) Gogoak ematen badio zerbait billatzea, (Mendiburu, 1760)  
mind.ERG give.IMP if.AUX something search.NOM.DET

ez du onik animak ura non-ere-bait arkitu artean  
neg aux peace.part soul.erg that.one.abs where-even-bait find until

“If the mind sets out to look for something, the soul has no peace until it finds it somewhere or other”

(45) Noiz ere bait topatu genduan tokiya (Bilintx, 1876)  
when even bait found aux place.det  
“At some point/finally we found the place”

(46) Baldin gure errege jaunaren antz, ta imajiña bat ekusiko bazendu  
cond our king lord figure and image one see.fut if.aux

nork ere bait oiñ pean darabillela (Juan Bautista Agirre, 1817)  
who.erg even bait foot under puts.comp

“If you saw a figure and image of our lord the king as someone steps on it”

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Focal particles do not occur inside the indefinite pronoun in present-day Basque, except for a few fossilized adverbial forms. The focal particle follows the indefinite suffix.

- (47) a. *non-ere-bait, noiz-ere-bait-> non-bait-ere, noiz-bait-ere*  
b. Wh-(Case)-Focal Particle-Bait

### 3.3. The form of the suffix

Azkue (1925) gathers a number of dialectal forms in which the relevant suffix for indefinite pronouns is *-baita*, not *-bait*. The historical record also lends us a number of cases of the same type:

- (48) Inoc            norbaita            illten            dabenian            (De la Quadra, 1784)  
Someone.erg who.baita.abs kill.impf aux.comp.when

“When someone kills someone/anyone”

- (49) milla            ducat bidalduco ditugula            urte onetan nic            uste,  
one.thousand ducat send.fut aux.comp this year I.erg think

orayn vere cerbayta            boa            (Juan de Zumarraga’s letter, XVI)  
now too what.baita goes

“I think that this year we will send 1000 ducats. Now too something is going”

- (51) Nos            baita bearra egin lei            domeka eta jaiegun,  
When baita work do mod sunday and holiday

bearrik ez egiteko esanta dagozanetan?            (Olaetxea (1740))  
work.part neg do.nom.fut said aux.rel.loc

To appear in M. Mitrovic (ed) *Logical Vocabulary and Logical Change*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

“Is it possible to work some time in Sundays or holidays in those days in which it is said that one must not work?”

These forms can be combined with the focus particle *ere*:

(52) Berantto orai mahatsez mintzatzeko, erranen du nunebeita  
Late.dim now grape.about talk.nom.fut say.fut aux where.baita

irakurzale batek baino haborok (Eskualduna, 1905)  
reader one.erg than more.erg

“Too late now to talk about the grapes, will probably say more than one of our readers”

But intriguingly, there is not a single instance of sequences of the form wh.case.bait.a. We will address this gap in the paradigm in the next section.

#### 4. Reconstructing the source of the indefinite pronoun series

If we put together the existing variants of the indefinite pronoun series according to the three relevant parameters of variation, as if each general pattern contributed to a more complete form, we would arrive at the following, starting from the bare indeterminate pronoun (53a):

- (53) a. wh ->  
b. wh-nominal inflection (As in 3.1.1-3.1.3)  
c. wh-nominal inflection-focal particle -> (As in 3.2.)  
d. wh-nominal inflection-focal particle-bait-> (As in 3.2)  
e. wh-nominal inflection-focal particle-bait-a -> (As in 3.3)

But (53e) is a recognizable structure in the syntax of Basque, it corresponds to correlative protases, as in (54a,b), or to unconditionals like (54c):

To appear in M. Mitrovic (ed) *Logical Vocabulary and Logical Change*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

(54) a. Nor ere baita "Whoever it is" (Pouvreau, Dictionary, XVIIth)  
Who.abs ptc bait.is

b. Nor ere baita ez da sarthuko (Duvoisin, 1860)  
Who.abs ptc bait.is neg aux come.in.fut  
"Whoever it is, he/she will not come in"

c. Baina zuek trublutzen zaituztenak, ekarriren du kondemnazioa,  
but you.abs disturb.hab aux.rel.d.erg bring.prosp aux condemnation.det

nor ere baita hura  
who.abs even bait-is that.one

"But the one who will disturb you, will bring his/her own condemnation, whoever that one is" (Leizarraga, Gal 5, 10, 1571)<sup>1</sup>

Correlative constructions have been relatively common in most of the Basque dialects until the XIXth century, and they are still marginally used in some of the Eastern varieties (Souletin). This striking formal resemblance justifies a hypothesis like the following:

(55) The historical and dialectal record of the variation found in existential indefinite pronouns corresponds to the selective lexicalization of portions of (53e)

The hypothesis in (55) is well supported typologically, it corresponds to what Haspelmath (1997) calls "it may be" type indefinite pronouns, that is indefinite pronouns whose original source is a clausal structure involving a copular predication and a modal component (56a, for Russian; 55b for Hebrew):

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<sup>1</sup> Translation of Vulgata's "Qui autem conturbat vos, portabit iudicium, quicumque est ille"

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- (56) a. kto-nibud “someone, anyone” < kto “who” + ni “even” + budi “be.subj”  
b. mi-se-hu “someone” < mi “who” + se Comp + hu copula

There is one gap in the range of attested historical and dialectal forms that clearly points to this origin: the fact that (57) does not exist.

- (57) \*wh.case.bait.a

Why is (57) an impossible form? The underlying structure of the copular correlative construct the source of the indefinite pronouns must be something like (58), that I adapt from Rebuschi’s analysis of Basque correlative protases (Rebuschi, 2003, 2009). The IP includes a copular construction, in which the wh-pronoun constitutes the predicate of a silent pronominal subject:

- (58) a. [<sub>CP1</sub> (wh-pronoun) C [<sub>FoCP</sub> (ere) F [<sub>CP2</sub> bait [<sub>IP</sub> ...pro be (wh-pronoun)]]]]

In (58), it is the silent pronominal *pro* that agrees with the copula, and bears the case corresponding to the identificational predicate: Absolutive. Dative or Ergative subjects, which obligatorily agree with the auxiliary, require “contentful predicates”, and they are not available in identificational contexts. On the other hand, postpositional phrases do not agree with the copula, so they can freely occur in the predicate position or as adverbial modifiers of a copular construction.

The hypothesis that indefinite pronouns have as their source a correlative protasis or free relative is supported by the residual occurrence in the historical corpus of instances of *-bait* forms which seem to keep the free-choice interpretation presumably available for *-bait* forms in earlier stages of the language. Consider for instance the following two examples, one (59a) from Oihenart’s poetry (mid XVIIth century, Larresoro’s edition, 1971, his interpretation), and the other one (59b) from one of Lazarraga’s poems (mid XVIth century, from the edition of Bilbao et al., 2016, their interpretation):

- (59) a. Hambat beti gotorreti egiten derautazu,

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so.much always harshly do.IMP AUX.3SA.1SD.2SE  
banintz bezain, zembait betzain edo ilhagin zarpazu  
COND.IRREALIS.1SA as.much.as WHICH.BAIT cowman or furrier miserable  
“You treat me as harshly as if I were just any cowman or miserable furrier”

b. Nonberebaita asco dago enetaco doloreric  
WHERE.FOC.BAIT.A much there.is for me pain  
“There is a lot of pain for me anywhere”

## 5. Externalizing inflection

The dialectally situated historical record of the process leading from free relatives to existential pronouns shows some of the well known problems of doing historical linguistics in Basque or in any other poorly attested language (see recently Campbell, 2016). The total amount of attestations of the form WH-ERG-BAIT, for instance (Table 1), is four, in two separate, non-connected dialectal areas: the central guipuscoan variety, and the low-navarrese variety. The four examples (two per each dialectal area) are furthermore separated from each other by several centuries: the low navarrese examples correspond to a a XVIth century text; whereas the Guipuscoan examples correspond to a text from the early XIXth century. Compared to those forms, the canonical forms in use in present-day Basque, with pronoun-external nominal inflection, are a clear majority already from the earliest texts on. Several qualifications are in order here though. First, the different dialectal areas do not have a continuous textual attestation in the Basque historical record, independently of the question at issue. We have to wait for the XVIIIth century for instance, to have the first long texts in the Guipuscoan dialects. Furthermore, those texts do not cover the entire Guipuscoan area, so much of the dialect internal variation is not covered by the existing records. The Low-Navarrese variety employed by Etxepare in the first book printed in Basque (1545), is not encountered again until the XVIIIth century. This means that tracking the evolution of indefinite forms cannot be simply done by directly tracking the existing occurrences of the relevant forms in the written record. We need to cross several sources of evidence. One additional source is the existence of



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similar formal patterns involving other morphological cases: for instance, WH-ERG-BAIT cases are not attested in Biscayan dialects, but the formally parallel WH-DAT-BAIT are, as amply shown in Table 2 (that I borrow from Etxagibel, 2007). The dative cases are also attested in High Navarrese, whose textual production is basically limited to Joaquin de Lizarraga's works during the XVIIIth century. Compared to the WH-CASE-BAIT cases on the other hand, patterns of the form WH-POSTP-BAIT are very well represented in all texts and periods, and they are conserved in some of the Basque vernaculars today. This points to the interesting fact that morphological case (and other nominal morphology, such as derivational number) has undergone externalization earlier than postpositional heads. In any case, the postpositional patterns support the interpretation according to which the variation found in the relative position of nominal morphology vis-à-vis the suffix – *bait*, must be explained along similar lines. Finally, the *-baita* variant of the suffix is only attested in western varieties (Biscayan) in the textual record, but a few adverbial cases of the same form exist in the opposite corner of the dialectal spectrum, for instance in Souletin (variants of *nonberebaita* in Table 3). This suggests, following a common way of interpreting this type of geolinguistically discontinuous distribution, that the forms were general once, but have disappeared in the central and eastern varieties.

Table 1. Case Externalization, Ergative.

	XVI	XVII	XVIII	XIX
wh-Case-Bait	Eastern : Detchepare (2)			
wh-Case- Ere-Bait				Central : Agirre (2)
wh-Bait-Case	Eastern :	Eastern :	Eastern :	Eastern :

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	Leizarraga (15)	Etxeberri (1, L) Oihenart (1, S) Pouvreau (20) Aranbillaga (6) Belapeyre (2, S)	Haraneder (12) Etxeberri S (1) Chourio (2) Mihura (2) Egiategi (2) Central: Lizarraga (68) Larramendi (4) Mendiburu(38) Western : Mogel, J.A. (11)	Duvoisin (126) Elizanburu(17) Lapeire (10) Joanategi (10) Intxauspe (6, S) Hualde Mayo (6) Central : Agirre (22) Uriarte (62) Beobide (3) Otaegi (6, G) Western : Astarloa (19) Mogel, J.A (6)
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Table 2. Externalization, Dative Case

	XVI	XVII	XVIII	XIX
Wh-Case-Bait			Central : Lizarraga (3)	Western : Mogel, J.A. (2) Mogel, J.J. (1) Añibarro (2) Zabala (1) J.J. Mogel (2) Astarloa (1)

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Wh-Case- Bait-Case			Central :  Lizarraga (10)	
Wh-Bait-Case	Eastern :  Leizarraga (7)	Eastern :  Pouvreau (1) Aranbilaga (1)	Central :  Ubillos (1) Mendiburu (1)  Lizarraga (1)  Eastern :  Haraneder (7)	Western :  Mogel, J.A. (1) Añibarro (6) Zabala (5) Mogel, J.J. (1) Astarloa (1)  Central:  Agirre (1) Iztueta (1) Uriarte (1) Arana (1) Soroa (1) Artola (1) Xenpelar (1)  Eastern :  Duhalde (1) Goyhetche (1) Duvoisin (1) Elizanburu (1) Joanategi (7)  Xaho (8)

				Intxauspe (8)
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Table 3. *-baita* forms

	XVI	XVII	XVIII	XIX/XX
norbaita			Western :  De la Quadra (1)	Azkue  (Mundaka, Gernika, Lekeitio)
zerbaita	Western :  Zumarraga (1)			
non(bere)baita	Western :  Lazarraga (1)		Western :  Urquizu (1)	Oriental :  Souletin (Urdiñarbe, Atlas)
noizbaita			Western :  Olaetxea (1)  Zuzaeta (1)	

## 6. Grammaticalization

When and how does a clausal structure start to be reinterpreted as a nominal one?  
 What are the morphosyntactic cues that make the child postulate a clausal underlying structure, and when and why those cues stop to be present?

### 6.1. The source structure

The form closest to a correlative protasis is the *-baita* form:

To appear in M. Mitrovic (ed) *Logical Vocabulary and Logical Change*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

- (59) nor (ere) baita  
who.abs focus bait.is  
“who (ever) he/she/it is”

I take this to be the source structure of the indefinite pronoun series. Correlative protases occur in a topic position, outside the IP-domain of the clause (Rebuschi, 2009).

- (51) [<sub>TopP</sub> [<sub>CP1</sub> (wh-pronoun) [<sub>FocP</sub> ere [<sub>CP2</sub> -*bait*...]]] Top<sup>0</sup> [<sub>IP</sub> ...]]

There is one important property that distinguishes the Basque correlatives from, other correlative constructions cross-linguistically: they can only be resumed by a pronominal, and pronominals are usually silent in Basque unless focused (Basque being a generalized pro-drop language, see recently Duguine, 2013). This is not a necessary property of correlative constructions, as shown by Hungarian. Compare in this regard (60a) and (60b):

- (60) a. Nor ere baita, gaztigatua izanen da  
who.abs focus bait.aux punished be.prosp is  
“Whoever this/is is, he/she will be punished”  
b. [Akivel Mari moziva jar] az a fiu illedelmes  
with.whom Mari cinema.to goes that the boy polite  
“The boy with whom Mari goes to the movies is polite”

“We must be held accountable for it, to the one that has bought it so expensively”

The fact that Basque correlative pronouns are typically silent provides potentially ambiguous evidence regarding the status of the correlative protasis as an IP-external clause, or as a clausal argument within the IP.

## **6.2. The first step: the elision of the copula.**

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Assuming that the suffix *-bait* is derived from the more complete *-baita*, we must account for the fall of the finiteness marker *-(d)a* “is” at the end of the suffix in *-bait* forms. Vowel reduction at the end of finite verbal forms is historically well attested in Basque (Mitzelena, 1985:235-236). This may be seen in the alternations presented by some of the word final verbal indexes in comparison with allomorphs that occur in word-internal position. Thus, the first person ergative index is *-t* word finally (61a), but *-da-* in relative clauses, in which the final suffix corresponds to the relative head *-n* (61b).

- (61) a. Du-t  
      have-1SERG  
      “I have”  
      b. Du-da-n  
          have-1SERG-REL  
          “‘That I have”

Several other examples can be gathered from a comparison of word final and word internal verbal indexes. It seems plausible that the absence of the finite verbal index in the indefinite pronouns can be due to the same general process of weakening at the origin of this phenomenon. If this is so, the absence of *-a* at the end of the suffix constitutes further evidence of its correlative origin.

### **6.3. The second step: Case Attraction.**

Wh-pronouns in correlative protases are case-marked internal to the clause they are in. Thus, in (62) the case Ergative of the wh-pronoun in the correlative protasis depends on the transitive predicate *grazia ukan* “to possess grace”, and not on the intransitive predicate *dohatsu izan* “be blessed” corresponding to the main clause (example from Etcheberry de Ciboure, 1627). The structure is given in (62b):

- (62) a. Hala ere dohatsu dela [nork baituke grazia]  
      thus too blessed is.comp who.erg bait.have.modal grace  
      “‘And thus be blessed the one who will have received the grace”

b. [<sub>TopP</sub>[<sub>TopP</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> ...*pro*<sub>i</sub>...*de*<sub>la</sub>] [<sub>CP</sub> *nork*      *baituke*      *grazia*]<sub>i</sub>]

Truncated *-bait* forms on the other hand have a case that corresponds to the main clause predicate. Consider the following example, from the Biscayan writer Moguel (end of XVIIIth century):

(63) Bide batera irten  
Road one.all come  
ta lapur batek kentzen badiozka nori bait eun ezkutu,...,  
and thief one.erg steal.imp if.aux who.dat bait one.hundred escudos  
“If you come out to a road, and someone steals from you 100 escudos...”

In §63) the dative case-marking in the *wh*-pronoun depends on the main clause predicate *kendu* “steal”, which assigns dative to its indirect object. One possibility is that the absence of overt auxiliary in the correlative protases has an effect in the realization of morphological case. For instance, if morphological case is determined at Spell Out (Alexiadou and Varlokosta, 2007), and if agreement is necessary to determine the relevant case, it could be that a morphologically absent auxiliary is not appropriate for that. In that case, it is the matrix T which determines the case K of the *wh*-word. Stacked case is also an option (on the basis of the realization of the more oblique case, see e.g. Vogel 2001).

The determination of morphological case by the matrix T requires a local relation between the *wh*-word in the correlative protasis and T. There are two possible ways of achieving that: either the local relation is based on the adjunction of the correlative clause to the pronominal correlate, or the correlative protasis occupies the position of the pronominal correlate as a free relative. Both options may be realized, as we will see.

There is comparative evidence showing that the correlative protasis in correlative constructions merges either directly to the pronominal DP-correlate, or to some position external to the IP that contains it (pace Bhatt, 2003; see Rebuschi and

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Liptak, 2007; Cable, 2005 for Tibetan). Both structures (64a,b) are attested in Basque, as shown in (65a,b):

- (64) a. [CP...wh-pronoun<sub>i</sub>...] (and) [IP ...pronoun<sub>i</sub>...]  
b. [[CP...wh-pronoun<sub>i</sub>...] and [DP pronoun<sub>i</sub>]]...

(65) a. [Nork ere hutsegiten baitu], (eta) hura zigortuko du Pellok  
who.erg focus fail.imp bait.aux and that punish.prosp aux Pello.erg  
"Pello will punish whoever makes a mistake"

b. [Nork ere hutsegiten baitu eta hura], Pellok zigortuko du  
who.erg focus fail.imp bait.aux and that Pello.erg punish.prosp aux  
"(lit.) Whoever makes a mistake and him/her, Pello will punish"

The wh-pronoun in the outer edge of the correlative protasis has an unvalued Case feature that is valued in a local relation to T (alternatively, see San Martin, 2001 for case agreement in floating situations in Basque). The correlative protasis then may raise to a topic position.

The free relative option may be illustrated by the case-doubling forms, such as (66), from the High Navarrese writer Lizarraga (1793):

- (66) ...noribaiti perjuiziorik in badiot  
who.dat.bait.dat harm done cond.aux  
"...if I did some harm to anyone..."

Free relatives in Basque are headed by the relative complementizer *-en*, and followed by a determiner *-a*.

- (67) Hutseginen duena gaztigatua izanen da  
fail.prosp aux.rel.d.abs punished be.prosp aux  
"The one who fails will be punished"



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Assuming that free relatives are headed by a Determiner on top of the relative CP (Caponigro, 2003), visible in Basque *-a* in (67), there are two potential loci for morphological case: the *wh*-pronoun inside the relative, and the D head, a potentially case bearing element:

(68) [DP D-Case [CP C<sup>0</sup> [IP...*wh*-pronoun...]]...

Rebuschi (2000) notes that free relatives in Basque present very often an intriguing morphological case pattern: the morphological case realized in the D of the free relative corresponds to the one the relative pronoun has at its source, not to the case of the matrix T:

(69) Hutseginen duenak           gaztigatua izanen da  
fail.prosp aux.rel.det.erg punished be.prosp aux  
“The one who will fail will be punished”

He proposes that this case follows as a result of case-agreement between the relative operator raised to the spec of DP and the D head:

(70) [DP (Op-case) D<sup>0</sup> [CP (Op-case) C<sup>0</sup> [IP...(Op-case)...]]]

The case doubling forms in the indefinite pronouns would correspond to a similar structure, one in which the *wh*-pronoun takes the place of the silent operator:

(71) [DP *wh*-case D<sup>0</sup> [CP (*wh*-case) C<sup>0</sup> [IP...(wh-case)...]]

There is a further piece of evidence in favour of the free relative status of the case doubling forms: they are incompatible with the presence of the focus particle *ere*. That is, sequences such as those in (72) are not attested in the textual or dialectal corpus:

(72) a. \**who.case.focus.bait.case*  
      b. \**Norierebaiti*



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The presence of the focal particle can thus be seen as a cue for the learner for the possible clausal structure of the construction. It prevents the externalization of inflection.

### **6.5. The externalization of the focal particle.**

Rebuschi observes (2003) that the focal particle could directly modify the wh-word inside a correlative operator. This possibility disappears by the end of the XVIIIth century. He provides the following two examples as an illustration:

(75) a. [Zer ere neurri] egin baidiokezue bertzei,... (Haraneder, 1740)  
what ptc measure done bait.you.may.have others.dat

“Whatever measure you have applied to others...”

b. [Zer neurriz] ere neurtu baitukezue... (Duvoisin, 1865)  
what measure.instr ptc measured bait.you.may.have

“By whatever measure you have measured others...”

I take this to mean that the relation between the focal particle and the wh-word can be established long distance (eventually as a case of association with focus, à la only or even, see Bayer, 1996).

(76) a. [Wh-wordFOCUS even NP] ->  
b. [Wh-wordFOCUS NP] even

If this is a possibility, the motivation for directly attaching the focal particle to the wh-word disappears, and the structure must have been less and less frequent.

### **6.6. Case and Number externalization**

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The actual indefinite pronouns in Basque have pronoun-external case and number, so a last step must have been taken in the grammaticalization process. I suggest that this step is the reanalysis of *bait* as D, an indefinite determiner. We make the following prediction (which is borne out):

- (77) a. There is no attested form of the type Wh-Case-Bait-Num  
b. There is no attested form of the type Wh-Num-Bait-Case

## 7. Summary

The series of changes that lead the grammaticalization of a correlative protasis into an indefinite pronoun can be summarized as follows:

- (78) a. Wh-Num-Case-Foc-*bait*-Cop -> Cop= $\emptyset$   
b. Wh-Num-Case-Foc-*bait* -> Dependent Case  
c. Wh-Num-Case-Foc-*bait*-> Externalization of Focus Particle  
d. Wh-Num-Case-*bait* Foc-> Reanalysis of *-bait* as D, externalization of Case  
e. Wh-*bait*-Num-Case Foc

## 8. What was there before there was something?

I have mentioned in the introductory section that the meaning conveyed by indefinite pronouns of the *-bait* sort could also be expressed by means of *edo*-forms, in some of the XVIth century authors, like Leizarraga:

- (79) Anhitz aldiz... igorri izan draue edozein Rege,...bake onetan  
many times send partc aux edozein king peace good.loc

bizi lizatentzat

live aux.subj.for

“Many times he has sent them a king/#any king, so that they could live in peace”

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(80) Zen bada Farieseuetaric edozeinbat Nikodemo deitzen zenik  
was then Pharisees.from edozein.one Nikodemo called was.rel

“There was one/#anyone among the Pharisees who was called Nikodemo”

The Dialectal Atlas of the Basque Language presents further instances of this archaism. The question referenced as 1732, corresponding to the translation of Spanish *alguien* “someone” contains a few answers involving an *edo*-form. The atlas gives a sentence like (81) as the Basque rendition of the sentence “You will see someone today in the fountain” in Mendata, a Biscayan village:

(81) Gaur edoseiñ ikusiko su iturrixan  
today EDO.WHICH see.PROSP AUX fountain.LOC  
“You will see someone in the fountain today”

That the answer is not a mistake is shown by other similar forms occurring in other dialectal areas. Here’s an instance from Beizama (reference 1734), in which an *edo*-form has an existential meaning, not a free-choice meaning. The entry in the atlas corresponds to Spanish *algo* “something”:

(82) Topauko du edose be  
find.PROSP AUX EDO.WHAT EVEN  
“He WILL find something or other”

We can safely conclude from the combination of historical and dialectal data, that *edo*-forms could convey an existential meaning, close to the English *someone/something or other*.

The domain of existential quantification was also occupied by *e*-forms. *E*-forms, besides occurring in the non-episodic contexts typical of free-choice elements (83, from Leizarraga, XVIth century)), could also be used to express existential

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quantification with no exhaustification implied, as in (84), from the souletin wrtier Tartas (XVIIth century).

(83) Hunetan pentsatzeak berak ere...,  
this.in think.nom.erg itself.erg too

nehori buruko ileak lazten derautza  
nehor.dat head.gen hair make stand.on.end

“The mere thinking about that makes anyone’s hair stand on end”

(84) Ordea behar den moldean, ...eta nehor hartako merezient denean  
but need is.rel manner.in and e.who that.for deserving is.rel.when  
“But in the way it must be, and when someone deserved it”

The related changes in the Basque quantificational system associated to the grammaticalization of correlative protases into indefinite pronouns is a matter that I defer for future research.

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