

2018 Special Lecture 2

Date: 15:00-16:30 pm, Tuesday, 18th, September, 2018

Venue: Meeting Room (1st Floor)

Graduate School of International Cultural Studies (Kawauchi-kita Campus)

Revisiting the lack of verbal interrogative words

Dr. Aritz Irurtzun



I analyze a mysterious cross-linguistic gap: the general lack of verbal wh-words ranging over any eventuality type. I will revisit the patterns attested in the literature arguing (i) that many of the alleged interrogative verbs are merely verbal forms employed in questions that do not question the type of eventuality at stake (such as in Kalaallisut, Nivkh, Kwamera, Lavukaleve, etc.), (ii) that often, rather than atomic and unanalyzable, interrogative verbs are syntagmatic (of the 'do what' type, as in Tianjin Mandarin, Yongxin Gan, Chongqing Mandarin, Huallaga Quechua, Wikchami, Mian, etc.), and, (iii) that the very few languages that do have interrogative verbs that question the type of eventuality necessarily involve a specific argument-structure (such as in Tyvan, Evenki, a range of Mongolic languages, Erromangan, Dyirbal, or Kavalan). From this discussion I conclude that there are no genuine interrogative verbs unrestrictedly ranging over any eventuality type. My proposal is that this gap derives from the ill-formed semantic representations they would generate: verbs are predicates of eventualities, and predication (\approx logical attribution/adscription) and questioning (\approx logical querying) are incompatible. Last, I argue that my proposal also predicts the universal lack of other conceivable interrogative elements such as adpositions or tense markers.

Selected papers:

- Aritz Irurtzun, 2016, "Strategies for argument and adjunct focalization in Basque". In B. Fernández & J. Ortiz de Urbina (eds.), *Microparameters in the grammar of Basque*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia : John Benjamins. 243–263.
- Aritz Irurtzun, 2015, "The Globularization Hypothesis of the Language-ready Brain as a Developmental Frame for Prosodic Bootstrapping Theories of Language Acquisition", *Frontiers in Psychology* 6:1817.
- Aritz Irurtzun, 2009, "Why Y: On the Centrality of Syntax in the Architecture of Grammar", in *Spelling Out Universal Grammar, Catalan Journal of Linguistics* 8 (J. Fortuny & A. J. Gallego (eds.)). 141-160.
- Aritz Irurtzun, 2006, "Focus and Clause Structuration in the Minimalist Program", in C. Boeckx (ed.), *Minimalist Essays*, Amsterdam : John Benjamins, pp. 68-96.

Bio: Currently **Dr. Irurtzun** works as a researcher at the *Centre national de la recherche scientifique* (CNRS). He works at the *UMR 5473* in Bayonne. Previously he was an assistant professor at the Department of Linguistics and Basque Studies of the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU). His current research combines theoretical linguistics and experimental methods to inquire about the architecture of language, the interfaces, and the nature of linguistic variability within a biolinguistics perspective.

Admission free

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