

C.C. Uhlenbeck and the Basque language

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In memory of Rudolf P.G. de Rijk (1937-2003)

1 Introduction¹

C.C. Uhlenbeck worked on a wide variety of languages, but Basque is probably the language that was the most stable research interest throughout his career. Basque, called *Euskara* in Basque, is a language isolate that cannot be related to any other language, despite many attempts to do so. Uhlenbeck's first linguistic publication, his 1888 dissertation, defended when he was only 21 years old, dealt with connections between Germanic and Baltic languages, but in the loose-leaf *stellingen* 'statements' which are often added to Dutch dissertations, he also added six statements on Basque (see appendix). His first article devoted to the language dates from two years later (Uhlenbeck 1890), and his last publication on Basque – and also the last one printed during his lifetime – was a review of Karl Bouda's book on possible parallels between Basque and Caucasian languages, published in 1951, the year of his death. In a career spanning more than 60 years, Uhlenbeck devoted dozens of minor and major papers to Basque. Almost all of his work on Basque was based on published sources, apart from some material collected in the field in the summer of 1903 (Uhlenbeck 1905a). During Uhlenbeck's second and last visit to the Basque country in 1922 for a conference visit, he does not seem to have done any field-work.

In a letter to the Dutch bascologist W.J. van Eys (1825-1914) dated October 17 1892, Uhlenbeck describes how he became interested in Basque. Matthias de Vries had mentioned similarities between Basque and languages of the Americas languages in his classes in Leyden. This aroused Uhlenbeck's interest, and he decided to learn Basque. He even wanted to write his dissertation on Basque, but this was judged to be inappropriate by his supervisors as a subject within Dutch studies. One of the reasons for Uhlenbeck to continue the study of Basque when he became professor in Germanic, was the favourable

judgment of his works by Van Eys (see Noordegraaf 2008).

Uhlenbeck's work on Basque can be characterized as centered around the following themes: (a) etymologies of words, including the identification of borrowings from and especially into Basque; (b) Basque phonology and phonetics; (c) possible relatives of Basque; (d) typological – or, as he calls them, “ethnopsychological” – characteristics of Basque; (e) internal reconstruction.

Uhlenbeck was not the first and only Dutch linguist who investigated and published on Basque. W.J. van Eys had done extensive work on Basque in the 19th century (see Goméz 2002), and Uhlenbeck has expressed his gratitude to him in correspondence with Van Eys (see Noordegraaf 2008); and in print Uhlenbeck called him “der erste, der mit wissenschaftlicher Methode die baskische sprache untersucht hat” [‘the first one who studied Basque with scientific methods’] (Uhlenbeck 1892:179). N.G.J. Deen (1937) wrote his dissertation on three Icelandic-Basque glossaries of the early 1600s. Rudolf De Rijk (1937-2003) published a number of important articles on Basque grammar (see De Rijk 1998 for a collection) and posthumously a 1388 page Basque grammar (2007). Wim Jansen (1948-) published a Basque-Dutch dictionary (1996) and a course in Basque. The author of these lines (1959-) published on Basque verbal morphology, Basque intertwined with Romani, Basque pidgins and contacts between Basques and Icelanders and Native Canadians (Bakker 1984, 1987, 1989, 1991). Among these Dutch bascolinguists, Uhlenbeck was probably the one with the most impact on Basque studies, together with Van Eys as one of the pioneers, and De Rijk who had become an honorary member of the Basque Academy (Knörr 2003).

In this paper I will give an overview of Uhlenbeck's work on Basque, organized into themes as mentioned before.

2 Etymology

Uhlenbeck's earliest articles with a Basque connection relate to etymological solutions for individual words. In 1890 he suggested, writing from Moscow, that Basque *gurruntzi* ‘dysentery’ was a loanword from Germanic, more specifically Gothic *urruns* ‘current’, ‘to water’. He does not consider the change in meaning to be problematic. In 1892b, Uhlenbeck suggested that Dutch *ansjovis* ‘anchovies’ was borrowed from Basque *ancharrain/panchu/paneka*, just like Spanish *anchoa* and French *anchois*. The same year (1892c) he suggested that Dutch *konijn* ‘rabbit’, a borrowing from Latin *cuniculus*, was cognate with the Basque word for rabbit *unchi* (modern spelling *untxi*). The Latin word would have been imported from the Iberian Peninsula, and the Basque word could be a direct cognate of the source word for the Latin word. In all three words the absence or presence of the initial consonant is explained by reference to comparable cases of variation in Basque dialects.

A slightly different road was taken to explain the history of the Dutch word *kabeljauw* ‘codfish’, which Uhlenbeck claimed to be cognate with Basque *bakalau* (1892d). The

Dutch word is clearly older than the Basque word in the sense that it was documented before the Basque word, however, and therefore Uhlenbeck suggests that the Basque word was borrowed from Dutch, with a process of metathesis responsible for the switching of the *k* and *b*; later the word would then have been reborrowed from Basque into Dutch as *bakkeljaau*). There was a discussion about the etymology of this set of words (Uhlenbeck 1892d, 1894b, Schuchardt 1895). According to Hugo Schuchardt (1842-1927), a scholar of Romance languages and Basque, a Romance language would have been used in contact between Basque and Dutch fishermen, and no direct borrowing between these languages was likely. This idea, however, must be rejected on the basis of more recent research in which it has become clear that Basque fishermen did use Basque in communication with e.g. Native Canadians and Icelanders in the 16th and early 17th century (Bakker et al. 1991). This makes direct borrowing between Basque and Dutch a distinct possibility.

Whereas his articles until then had been short and concerned individual words, Uhlenbeck also published his first longer article on Basque in this period. Published in 1892, but probably finished in 1891 as he refers to it several times as his 1891 article, this 50-page article *Baskische Studien* dealt with a number of themes that were to occupy Uhlenbeck throughout his work on Basque: ergativity, suggested or possible connections between Basque and Uralic languages and Indo-European, suffixes, and dialectal variation (1892a). The etymological remarks are limited to suggestions concerning connections of Basque words with words in other languages (see section 5 below). Uhlenbeck was only in his mid-20s when he published this first more extensive article on Basque in 1892 (1892), part of which he later rejected as being untenable. In February 1935 he wrote in a letter to Georges Lacombe or René Lafon:

Vous pouvez mentionner mes *Baskische Studien*, mais en ajoutant que ces études ne représentent que les rêveries de ma jeunesse. Je n'ai pas renoncé à toutes les idées qui s'y trouvent; mais il n'y a rien dans les *Baskische Studien* que je pourrais affirmer maintenant sans réserve. Le basque n'est pas apparenté à l'indo-européen.
(Lacombe and Lafon 1936:111)²

In 1893 Uhlenbeck provided an overview of Germanic loan words in Basque, all in all a few dozen items, to be discussed in more detail below. This also led to a public discussion between Uhlenbeck and Schuchardt that lasted a few years.

Uhlenbeck published not only articles about the etymologies of specific words, but also a number of collective articles in which he discussed several words from different languages, often with titles like 'Etymologisches', 'Etymologica' or 'Miscellen'. Some of these have Basque connections. In 1894b he discussed the widespread word for 'bay', as in Dutch *baai*, French *baie* and Basque *baia*. Uhlenbeck is convinced, on the basis of the existence of the place name Bayonne, that the word is old in Basque, but he is not sure about its ultimate source. He also repeats his statements on the origin of *kabeljaau*

/bakalau.

After a break of some years in which Uhlenbeck did not publish on Basque etymologies, he wrote a paper (1903b) in which he discusses some words common to Basque and Romance. The word *aberats* ‘rich’, which is a loan from Occitan based on *avere* ‘animal’, may have a Basque suffix *-ts* rather than an Occitan *-s* added to *averat*. *Billos* ‘naked’ is an Occitan loan (*blos*), but it is likely folk-etymologically connected with Basque *bito* ‘hair’. Uhlenbeck thinks that the Basque words *erbal* and *ope/opil* ‘small bread’ are not loans from Romance, contra Schuchardt. Basque *papor* ‘crumb’ is a reduplicated form of *aphur* and not a loan from Spanish *papar*, all meaning ‘crumb’. Further, Uhlenbeck thinks that Basque *elur* ‘snow’ is connected with *erori* ‘to fall’. Basque *belar/bedar* ‘grass’ might be a loan from Romance, a root cognate with French *vert* ‘green’. Also *gudizi* ‘desire’ is a loanword from Latin *codicia*, Basque *ollo* ‘hen’ from Spanish *pollo*, and Bizkaia Basque *opail* ‘April’ could be a loan as well. Lapurdi Basque *pesuin* ‘dike’ could be from *prensio* /*prison*, rather than Latin *defensio* as suggested by Schuchardt. Finally he corrects a few errors in his 1903a monograph.

In later years Uhlenbeck continued to publish on the etymology of words, such as the word for ‘moon’, which could mean ‘light of the dead’ (1928; see also Zytsar 2000), the different words for ‘woman’ (1930), *udagara* ‘otter’ (1932a) – according to him a loan from Germanic **udro*, perhaps via Gallic – and *bilarrausi*, originally a taboo word for ‘calf’ used only in the northern dialects, derived from the word *bular*/**bilar* ‘breast’ and *autsi* ‘broken, ripped’. He also devoted an article to the Basque word *elkar* ‘each other’ which shows a striking similarity with the Dutch word *elkaar* with the same meaning; Uhlenbeck argues that the Basque word is derived from a combination of the reconstructed ergative and absolutive pronouns **(h)ark-(h)ar* (1927).

Especially in the early part of his career, Uhlenbeck discussed the etymologies of many individual words in different languages, most often Germanic ones, comparing them with Indic, Greek, Latin/Romance and other early Indo-European languages. Sometimes he also discussed the more philosophical side of the trade, for instance in an article in which he compared his own etymologies for Gothic words with those given by a colleague, ending his article with the remark:

Die etymologische wortforschung bleibt leider zu sehr von subjektiven anschauungen und neigungen abhängig, und in den meisten fällen kann ja niemand sagen, dass gerade seine eigene auffassung die richtige ist. (1902b:136)³

Basque etymology presented special challenges. The task is difficult because “as so often in Basque etymology it remains *nil scire tutissima fides*” (1932a:3).

In 1942 Uhlenbeck presented an extensive list of words which, in his view, belonged to the original stratum of Basque vocabulary, trying to identify typical stem forms (see section 3). Around the same time (1940-1941a), he came back to the early Indo-European loans in Basque, inspired by a paper by colleagues Georges Lacombe and René

Lafon on this matter (1936). Uhlenbeck stated that there were only a few old Germanic and Indo-European loans, and he lists them (see section 5).

When Uhlenbeck realized he had made erroneous etymologies in his work, he was able to adjust his opinion. In Uhlenbeck (1940-1941b) he states a few times that he has had to revise his earlier views, and that he knows by his own experience that it is necessary to know the neighboring languages in order to correctly identify loans.

3 Phonology

Uhlenbeck's first longer article on Basque (1892) dealt with several subjects, among which phonological variation. In the article, he points out dialectal variation involving $r \sim l$ (and d , n and \emptyset), sibilants, $b \sim m$ (sometimes from Romance / v /), vowel variation around liquids and nasal consonants, vowel assimilation within words, Ablaut in roots, variation in stops (e.g. voicing), prothetic g -, prothetic vowels, dropping of initial labial stops, the development of $k > h$, and metathesis. Typically, he provides pairs or sets of words displaying this variation, without attempting an analysis or reconstruction.

Uhlenbeck's first major work on Basque phonology was his 1903 comparative study of Basque dialects (1903a). At that point he had not visited the Basque Country yet, and he wrote that his knowledge of Basque was entirely based on grammars, dictionaries and texts (1903:1). For this monograph, Uhlenbeck systematically noted all phonological variation between dialects, as reflected in written forms, dealing with the five vowels (5-44) and the consonants (44-100). A typical entry is "guip. *azkazal*: nord-onavar. *ezkezal* 'nagel'" (nail), where "guip." refers to the dialect of Gipuzkoa and "nord-onovar." to Northern High Navarrese. He often tries to identify contexts in which a certain phoneme may have changed into another. The presentation of data is somewhat overwhelming, and many sharp observations about processes, etymologies and frequencies of processes are hidden between masses of word sets. In addition, Uhlenbeck discusses and illustrates some phonotactic principles, such as the fact that Basque words cannot start with / r /, and he identifies a number of processes of insertion, deletion, assimilation/dissimilation and metathesis (35-44, 96-100).

Uhlenbeck presents a wealth of data, but no attempt is made to reconstruct any word or proto-phoneme. It is as if one reads a researcher's notebook of data made available to the general public, rather than a synthesis intended for publication. In his introduction he states that he hopes that his book, despite its shortcomings, will contribute to put an end to the uncritical performances of the "Euskarophilen" and draw the attention of serious linguists to the Basque language. The book was indeed reviewed by several bascologists. Th. Linschmann (1903:1189) calls it "diligent and valuable", and considers it a more systematic treatment of Basque comparative phonology than earlier works. His review consists mostly of criticisms of details, and he reproaches Uhlenbeck for missing some crucial publications and for not recognizing all Romance loans. Further Linschmann thinks that Uhlenbeck rejects a genetic connection with Finnish too easily.

Schuchardt published his review in the Dutch journal *Museum* (Schuchardt 1903), to which Uhlenbeck also contributed regularly. Schuchardt found that Uhlenbeck had rendered a great service to researchers, but also that he could and should have rendered an even greater service (1903:396), as he had only provided the bricks but no attempt at starting a building. With regard to the data and analysis, Schuchardt finds that the phonological variation is more systematic than was hitherto assumed, especially if one looks at the dialect level, pointing out analogical processes. He further points out that the frequent onomatopoeic expressions and ideophones need special consideration. Schuchardt also shows that many of the words assumed to be original Basque words by Uhlenbeck are actually borrowings from neighbouring Romance languages (397-400). He also points out that Uhlenbeck had been misled by the spelling of a number of words, leading to incorrect inferences about the actual phonemes represented (405-406). Further Schuchardt tries to begin to build the building that was lacking, and makes some more general observations on Basque reconstruction and sound changes. Overall, Schuchardt laments the lack of clarity in Uhlenbeck's overview (406), and expresses his surprise as to why a source like L.L. Bonaparte, who had published extensive field data on Basque dialects collected in the 1860s, was not consulted. Uhlenbeck called the review "valuable" in a published reaction (1904a) but reacted only to one detail. The next year (1905a) he reacted to another point of criticism: Schuchardt did not believe in Uhlenbeck's view that initial /tʃ/ in Basque could be reconstructed as a relic of a diminutive; Uhlenbeck presented some new supportive material. He also wrote that he learned a lot from Schuchardt's review (1905a), and he acknowledged some of his own shortcomings that Schuchardt had pointed out.

Luis Michelena (in Basque: Koldo Mitxelena) praised Uhlenbeck's work in the introduction to his monumental ground-breaking monograph on Basque historical phonology (1961:12) as "excellent".

Vinson (1905a, 1906) found it interesting, but noted that it had the disadvantage of being based only on written sources, without taking all of them into account.

The monograph was translated into French some years later (1910), both in parts in a periodical, and as a monograph. Many of Uhlenbeck's Basque works were in fact translated from Dutch and German into French or Spanish, usually in improved versions of the originals, with the text also checked by Uhlenbeck. In his review of the French translation, Grammont (1915) welcomed the book and its data, mentioned a few points where Basque is unusual (aspirated stops, the dropping of intervocalic /n/ via /h/, and processes regarding diphthongization), and noted that more descriptive and analytical work is needed. Meillet in his review (1911) agrees that most of the work lies ahead, and considers this work the first of its kind, showing which way to pursue. By 1923, however, Uhlenbeck had found so many errors and misinterpretations that he decided to publish a sequel (1923c). He systematically listed all details on which he had changed his mind, often inspired by reviews of his book, such as those by Vinson (1905a, 1906:16), Linschmann (1903) and especially Schuchardt (1903). He does not mention Grammont's review

published in 1910. Some of the mistakes Uhlenbeck identified were mistakes in his sources, of which he mentions Van Eys, and he regrets not having made more use of the works of Prince Louis Lucien Bonaparte and Julien Vinson, two more recent fieldworkers. Other errors were caused by his lack of knowledge of the Romance languages and the literature on them, as there were many unidentified loans in his material. Uhlenbeck (1903a) and (1923c) were reprinted in tandem in 1967.

The question of /e~/o/ variation remained an interesting issue for Uhlenbeck. Some Basque words show dialectal variation between these two vowels. In 1914 he published a paper in which he discussed additional examples (*hoboro* 'more'~*hobe* 'better', *hogei*~*hogoi* 'twenty', *bohor*~*behor* 'twin'), using also older and dialectal sources as evidence for interdialectal influence and assimilation. In 1942 he returned to this issue, when he discussed long-distance assimilation of vowels. Many variants exist where a word may have a form with identical vowels and different vowels (e.g. *gezur*~*guzur* 'lie'). Uhlenbeck assumes that the roots with identical vowels are innovations, after a process of vowel assimilation.

The vocabulary of Basque continued to interest Uhlenbeck. In an extensive paper on the original vocabulary (1942), he made an analysis of the phonotactics and syllable structure of Basque words. Verbal roots are monosyllabic, nominal roots bisyllabic or monosyllabic.

Uhlenbeck further discusses recurrent endings and beginnings of words, such as *-tz(e)/-ts*, *-ar*, *-er*, *-or*, *-ur*, *-al,-el*, *-en*, *-in*, *-un*, but he does not speculate about whether these are remnants of earlier suffixes. Only in the case of the verbal initial elements *e-/i-*, and the endings *-n* and *-i*, he *does* assume that these are indigenous verbal markers (*eman* 'to give', *igeri* 'be wet'). The productive *-tu* suffix is borrowed from Latin *-tus*.

4 Typology and grammatical description

Even though typology was not an established field of research during Uhlenbeck's lifetime, some of his works can be considered typological *avant la lettre*, especially in morphological matters. In 1892a he observed reduplicative patterns in a number of words, but he did not do more than list examples. In 1904-1905 he published a paper in which he discussed the remarkable parallels in nominal compounding between Basque and Indo-European. He lists dozens of *dvandva*, *tatpuruSa*, *karmadhaaraya* and *bahuvrihi* compounds in Basque, without, however, trying to explain the parallels. Uhlenbeck just points out that it is an example of the frequent phenomenon that languages between which one cannot show a genetic connection, often use the same means of expression. In 1909 he added the word *emakume* 'woman' to this inventory of compounds, as a compound of *eman* 'to give' and *ume* 'child'. It is now accepted, however, that the first part of the compound is *ema*, a cognate of Gascon *hema* (< Latin *femina* 'woman') (H. Knörr, p.c.).

In the same period Uhlenbeck (1905b) published a monograph on Basque derivational morphology and an article about Basque grammatical typology, also published as

a monograph. Both were in Dutch. The monograph is an inventory of around 90 Basque derivational suffixes – without any claim of completeness –, with ample examples from historical and modern texts and grammars, but no information about productivity. Some are identified as loans from Romance languages. The work was praised by Julien Vinson (1905b, 1906) as being “very complete and thorough”, but he does not agree with all explanations. A French translation appeared in 1909.

In his 1906 sketch of Basque, Uhlenbeck points out a number of traits of Basque that are different from “Standard Average European”. Almost every time he discusses a grammatical phenomenon, he points to typological parallels in other languages, in some cases also to intriguing similarities in the form of functional elements with the same functions. The languages with which Uhlenbeck compares Basque, are especially Dakota but also Eskimo, Afroasiatic, Algonquian, Caucasian, Uralic and Indo-European. The grammatical traits dealt with are a.o. verbal morphology, periphrastic verbal constructions versus synthetic forms, verbal agreement with subject, object and indirect object and even the interlocutor, plural marking and case marking on nouns (or rather noun phrases), diminutives, possessive marking and lack of gender marking. Special attention is devoted to alignment typology, and active/stative systems, including observations on the frequent identity of ergative case markers and genitive and instrumental case forms.

Wilhelm Schmidt (1907) reviewed the booklet, adding a few additional parallels with languages of West Africa and Papua New Guinea. Among Schmidt’s observations were a few implicational universals, such as the fact that ergative languages have prenominal genitives and are suffixing languages! It was not until the 1960s that such implicational universals were systematically studied, beginning with the work of Joseph Greenberg (1966).

In some cases Uhlenbeck reacts to other publications where he feels he needs to correct the authors, e.g. Marr, Trombetti and Winkler in 1923a, and Feist, Karst and again Trombetti in 1932c.

5 Wider connections of Basque

Basque is generally accepted to be an isolate, i.e. a language with no known relatives. The search for relatives of Basque has occupied many professional and amateur linguists for a long time. Uhlenbeck has commented on several of the proposed connections: Indo-European, Uralic, Caucasian and Chukchi. I will deal with them one by one.

In 1913 Uhlenbeck declared that he considered Basque to be an isolate. He was forced to do this, because Sigmund Feist (1913) had misrepresented his position on this matter, suggesting that Basque and Indo-European were genetically related according to Uhlenbeck. Pointing out structural parallels between languages, Uhlenbeck said, does not imply a genetic connection.

In an early paper, Uhlenbeck had pointed out some lexical similarities between Basque and Indo-European suggestive of a possible genetic connection (1892a:225-228).

He lists ten Basque roots with parallels in form and meaning in early attested Indo-European languages such as Sanskrit, Greek, Gothic and Latin, but he also notes that there are “many others”, adding that “such a relationship is not at all impossible” (1892a:228) and that he did not doubt that a connection between Basque and Indo-European would be proven in the future. Later, however, he publicly retracted the Basque-Indo-European genetic connection proposed in this paper, on more than one occasion (e.g. 1913, 1932c:123). For instance in 1913:

Seit 1890 habe ich nichts geschrieben, woraus man entnehmen könnte, daß ich geneigt wäre, das Baskische mit dem Indogermanischen in Zusammenhang zu bringen. Vielmehr habe ich seitdem das damals über einen solchen Zusammenhang Vermutete öffentlich widerrufen. Meine nach 1900 erschienenen Abhandlungen bezweckten keineswegs, das Baskische in irgendwelchen Sprachstamm einzureihen, sondern die isolierte Sprache soweit als möglich aus sich selbst zu erklären.
(1913:171-172)⁴

And he adds bitterly:

Es wäre wohl besser, nichts zu schreiben. Man wird ja doch nur mißverstanden, insbesondere wenn man gelegentlich Erscheinungen aus stammfremden Sprachen als Parallelen heranzieht.⁵

In later work he did discuss lexical similarities between Basque and Germanic, but always as Germanic *borrowings* into Basque (1893, 1894a, b, 1913; see also below). In Uhlenbeck (1940-1941a) he listed a few dozen Basque words which he assumed to be pre-Latin borrowings from Indo-European (IE), often Celtic (C) or Germanic (G): *andere* ‘lady’ (C), *(h)ar-* ‘take’ (IE), *argi* ‘light’ (IE), *arrano* ‘eagle’ (??), *(h)artz* ‘bear’ (C), *burkhi* ‘birch’ (G), *bepuru* ‘eyebrow’ (C), *-da-* ‘drink’ (IE), *eperdi* ‘buttocks’ (IE), *erdi* ‘half’ (IE, Indic), *gar* ‘flame’ (IE), *gose* ‘hunger’ (Hittite, Tocharian), *ille, ulle* ‘wool’ (IE), *mardo* ‘weak’ (IE), *mendi* ‘mountain’ (IE), *mo(s)ko* ‘beak’ (Indic), *mustu* ‘fist’ (IE), *orma* ‘ice’ and *hotz* ‘cold’ (Baltic), *sei* ‘six’ (IE and Afro-Asiatic), *tegi, toki* ‘place’ (C), *ur* and *euri* ‘rain, water’ (IE), *zazpi* ‘seven’ (more similar to Afro-Asiatic than IE). He does not consider this list of suggested very early loans to be complete. A few years later, he states that a systematic comparison of Celtic and Basque is necessary, but more in order to discover early contacts than to prove a genetic connection. He suspects that Celtic elements may have entered Basque via the Romance languages (1946).

The first time Uhlenbeck discussed a possible relationship between Basque and non-Indo-European languages was in 1892a. He mentions other scholars’ attempts to link Basque with Ural-Altaic and Afro-Asiatic, but he rejects their suggestions with regard to a Basque connection with Ural-Altaic because he considers the proposed similarities (e.g. the presence of agglutinative case endings, the form of the genitive, locative and allative cases and plurals, etc.) not to be definitive proof for a genetic relationship, but at most to

be suggestive of one. Such properties can also be found in other languages, he says. The necessary formal similarities in the basic vocabulary are lacking, and most of the proposed cognates are “wild” (1892:185). In addition, there are no regular sound correspondences.

A decade later Uhlenbeck returned to claims of a genetic relationship of Basque with the Uralic languages (1905d). He criticized Gutmann’s (1904) claim that the Iberian Romance word *sarna* ‘scabies’ and *sarría* ‘net’ (actually *sare*; H. Knörr, p.c.) were words common also to Basque and Finno-Ugric, and therefore suggestive of being loans between the two families, without specifying in which direction. Uhlenbeck writes that he does not want to exclude early borrowings between the two families, but he presents arguments against claims of genetic relations. First, Basque does not have vowel harmony (except occasionally; see section 3 on vowel assimilation), which is a very conspicuous trait of Finno-Ugric. Second, even though there are some typological similarities in the nominal area (many case suffixes), the verbal conjugations are very different in the two families. Third, the pronominal elements do not show similarities: Basque shows more similarities with Afro-Asiatic languages. Fourth, there are some lexical similarities between Basque and Afro-Asiatic. Uhlenbeck was still of the same opinion in 1946, when he criticized P. Fouché’s (1943) work in which the author claimed that Altaic elements could be found in Basque, an idea that Uhlenbeck strongly rejected.

In other words, Uhlenbeck points to some typological differences between Ural-Altai and Basque (vowel harmony, verbal morphology) and similarities between the form of lexical items (without specifying which ones) and pronominal elements of Basque and Afro-Asiatic. Today, typological differences would not be sufficient reason to reject genetic relationships. In any case, they do not prove a genetic connection between Finno-Ugric and Basque. Pronominal and lexical similarities would be considered suggestive but not sufficient evidence for a genetic relationship. Or, as Uhlenbeck wrote: “(...) so muß man auch ja nicht nur morphologische Parallelen, sondern vor allem stoffliche Übereinstimmungen mit irgend einem Sprachgeschlechte nachweisen“ [‘thus one has to point out not only morphological parallels, but in the first place material similarities with some language family’] (1905d:757), whereas “Sicherheit nur durch eingehende Laut- und Wortvergleiche erzielt werden könnte” [‘certainty can only be attained by thorough comparisons of words and sounds’] (1905d:758). In other words, Uhlenbeck rejects a genetic connection between Ural-Altai and Basque. He kept doing so throughout his lifetime, despite criticism of Linschmann (1903).

In his 1907 typological sketch of Basque, Uhlenbeck briefly mentions possible other genetic connections of Basque. He writes that nothing is certain, and that some facts point in the direction of Africa. He does not consider it proven that Basque is related with Afroasiatic languages, the language family that includes Berber, Semitic and other languages of the Northern and Eastern part of Africa, but it can as yet not be excluded (1906:6).

Es gibt unleuchtenbare Berührungspunkte zwischen dem baskischen und dem cha-

mitischen Wortschatze und Gutmann hätte neben den Vertretern der uralaltaischen Hypothese auch Chamitisten wie Giacomino und von der Gabelentz erwähnen sollen. Auch die ruhigen Äusserungen Schuchardts über die baskischen Verwandtschaftsprobleme hätten Berücksichtigung verdient. Damit soll nicht gesagt sein, dass ich semitisch-chamitischen Ursprung des Baskischen für sicher oder uralaltaische Verwandtschaft für ausgeschlossen halte, aber vorläufig meine ich doch, dass es näher liegt den Blick nach Afrika als nach den Steppen und Tundren zu wenden. Jedenfalls möchte ich vor einseitiger Beurteilung des Baskischen warnen. Will man aber eine bisher isolierte Dialectgruppe dem Uralaltaischen einreihen, so wird das eher mit den Eskimo-Sprachen als mit dem Baskischen gelingen.

(1905c:306-307)⁶

Uhlenbeck remained interested in connections between Basque and Afroasiatic. His review of Wölfel's paper (1940-1941b) on this matter was very critical because of the author's methodological weaknesses, his lack of knowledge of Basque grammar and his insufficient knowledge of the neighboring Romance languages. The connection was most likely secondary (1946). Uhlenbeck considered the presence of Afroasiatic words in Basque a "proven fact", and a systematic comparison would be desirable (1946). He finds the state of research weak, and criticizes some of the researchers involved in this endeavor.

While Uhlenbeck was working on Basque, there was an ongoing lively discussion about a possible genetic relationship between Basque and the languages of the Caucasus. The languages of the Caucasus share a number of locally widespread typological traits (among them ergativity), but the label "Caucasian languages" is geographical as much as linguistic. Languages of the Iranian, Slavonic and Indic branches of Indo-European language family are spoken in the Caucasus. Turkic languages are also spoken there. The languages that are neither Indo-European nor Turkic, i.e. the Caucasian group, cannot be proven to be all genetically related. Currently, classifications of the Caucasian languages – universally considered to be indigenous, i.e. present in the area before Turkic and Indo-European language speakers entered the area – range from one to four independent groupings.

For Uhlenbeck, the most promising connection of Basque was those with the indigenous languages of the Caucasus. In 1923a he devoted a paper to this, in which he weighed the available evidence as put forward by Schuchardt (whose work is called excellent), Winkler (of mixed quality), Marr (only partly accessible and often confusing), Oštir (disappointing) and Trombetti (the most original and extensive). One of the problems of course is that some of the languages of the Caucasus differ so much from each other that scholars today are not even in agreement about the number of families. The different comparative works on Basque reviewed by Uhlenbeck typically involve different subsets of Caucasian languages – which does not make the case very strong. In 1932c he also formulated some harsh criticism of bascologists trying to prove remote connections: Gutmann/Goutman (1904, 1910, 1913) is a dilettant; Trombetti is a genius, but his

statements are unprovable and his theory of monogenesis is simplistic (cf. Trombetti 1925). Marr was “justifiedly criticized” by Trombetti, Joseph Karst (1928a, b) wrote some “fantastic” papers, full of disorder, and Karl Oštir lacked critical abilities (see also Uhlenbeck 1923f).

Uhlenbeck does not deal with conjugations since these are so different even between the Caucasian languages themselves, that it makes no sense to compare them. Neither does he want to deal with typological similarities, as he considers these to be meaningless for proving genetic connections. He discusses both grammatical elements, such as the personal pronouns, verbal agreement markers, a causative marker, the dative, diminutives, plural markers, the suffixed article, and a few derivational suffixes. In all cases there is indeed some similarity in form and function, but Uhlenbeck does not exclude chance similarities. Further he lists those words from Basque (sometimes a form of proto-Basque) that have been proposed as cognates to the extent that he finds them reasonable. Close to 70 words are presented, from a range of domains such as colour terms, body parts, basic verbs, flora and fauna and everyday words. Nevertheless, he is not willing to accept a genetic connection, because the mere comparison of a range of words and morphemes is insufficient evidence. As long as there are no examples of regular sound changes, the connection may be considered promising, but not proven. In this article, Uhlenbeck also mentions several times that the connection with Afroasiatic (“Hamitisch”), especially Berber, is likewise important. Also later in his life (e.g. 1940-1941b:972) he considers the clarification of the connections between Basque and Caucasian to be essential and needed.

In his review of Trombetti’s book about the origin of Basque, in which Trombetti suggested possible links with many languages, Uhlenbeck (1926) expresses “doubt about the possibility” of such a task. He is pessimistic about the solution of the “ever hopeless question of the origins” (1926:423), at least as long as Basque dialects have not been sufficiently described.

In 1942 he returns to Trombetti in more detail. Uhlenbeck shows that many words that were linked by Trombetti to languages in other parts of the globe, are mere variants of the same Basque root, e.g. *abo* and *aho*, both meaning ‘mouth’ and connected to different words elsewhere. In the same paper he comes back to the possible connection of Basque to Caucasian languages based on recent publications by the Caucasologist George Dumézil (1942:336-344). At this point Uhlenbeck is more positive about a possible Basque-Caucasian connection than he has ever been before. Even after rejecting some proposals as unlikely or untenable, “enough striking points of similarity, both morpho-syntactic and lexical, remain, which both individually and collectively cannot be explained away by resorting arbitrarily to convergence or ethno-psychological parallelism. An ancient genetic relation between Basque and Caucasian exists in any case, even if we leave the nature of these relations undecided” (1942:343). In 1946 he even calls this connection “undeniable”, even though he is not sure of its nature.

Uhlenbeck's very last article published during his lifetime, in the year of his death, was a brief review of a book on Basque-Caucasian connections (1951) by Karl Bouda. Uhlenbeck praises and recommends the book, but he does not make any statements with regard to its contents. There is some indirect criticism, however, of another, unnamed linguist, who knows Basque and its literature, but not linguistic methods, who had apparently reproached Bouda for having relied too much on Uhlenbeck. According to Uhlenbeck, however, it is not so much his name but his argumentation that Bouda had relied on.

Uhlenbeck's view of a connection with the poorly attested Iberian language, the extinct language of the Iberian Peninsula, attested mainly in inscriptions, is twofold. He does not seem to believe in a genetic connection between Basque and Iberian, and he seems to explain the undeniable similarities between the two languages as resulting from contact between the indigenous Basques and the Iberian invaders, a statement he based on physical-anthropological data (1932e, 1946).

One of the parallels between Basque and Amerindian languages Uhlenbeck had pointed out concerned ergativity (see also below) and other types of alignment. These observations appeared in 1916, in what was to become one of his most famous articles. In the article he compared ergativity with passive constructions, including attempts at a psychological explanation. The article (in Dutch) is not so famous because it was so widely read, but because Sapir's (1917) review of it was widely read and quoted. One of the languages that Uhlenbeck compared to Basque was the likewise ergative language Chukchi (1916:10-11). In 1925 he pointed out, on the basis of newly published material on Chukchi, that Chukchi and Basque ergativity were even more similar than assumed earlier, without, however, suggesting any form of genetic connection, but rather a parallel development.

The Siberian language Chukchi is considered another possible connection of Basque in Uhlenbeck's work. Uhlenbeck considered the similarities in grammar not to be the result of a genetic connection. However, he mentions Karl Bouda's work on lexical and syntactic parallels between the two languages (Bouda 1941). Uhlenbeck did not want to pass a judgment on Bouda's observed lexical similarities, however, and suggests that the syntactic parallels should be explained in a "psychological" way (1942:335). Furthermore, in 1946 Uhlenbeck evaluated almost 30 proposed cognates between Basque and Chukchi, and very few are not rejected. Uhlenbeck concludes, with some understatement, that the link is "still not certain" (1946:20).

Even though Uhlenbeck took the possibility of genetic links with Caucasian and Afroasiatic languages seriously, and to some extent also those with Chukchi, he seems to have considered these connections in any case too remote to be provable at that time. Even though he once was open to a Basque-Indo-European genetic connection, he rejected this later and regarded Basque as an isolate, with intriguing but unprovable similarities with North African and West Asian languages. The current consensus is also that Basque is an isolate.

6 Internal reconstruction

In several papers, Uhlenbeck used internal reconstruction to suggest forms in earlier stages of Basque. In 1927a he dealt with the frequency of initial *b-* in body parts. First he lists some 50 non-borrowed words that do not start with *b-*, then 17 words starting with *b-*, which Uhlenbeck considers a relatively large number. He proposes an origin in a prefix, even though there are only few cases in which the remaining root can be related to another word, such as *behatz*, *atz* ‘finger’. Uhlenbeck thinks that the prefix was originally a third person possessive prefix, and that the possessive pronoun *bere* ‘his own’ and the form *bera* ‘self’ would be a cognate. On the other hand, there are also many words, like those for ‘cow’, ‘grass’ and ‘mare’, that start with a possible prefix *be-*. Uhlenbeck compares them with Bantu-type prefixes, suggesting a different source for a formally similar prefix. The argumentation is not very persuasive.

In the same year (1927b) he derived the reciprocal pronoun from a double personal pronoun (see section 2). Similarly, Uhlenbeck assumed earlier reduplication processes to be responsible for a few roots with repeated consonants.

7 Uhlenbeck and Schuchardt: discussion on etymologies

It will be clear to the reader that Hugo Schuchardt was a major figure in the field of Basque studies. It may therefore be of interest to focus on some of the debates between Schuchardt and Uhlenbeck – in which Schuchardt usually appeared as the winner. Born in 1842, Schuchardt (1842-1927) was 24 years Uhlenbeck’s senior, and in the discussion he regularly takes the role of the veteran scholar.

There are a number of similarities between Uhlenbeck and Schuchardt. Both had a wide interest in languages, and they shared their passion for Basque. Both lived long and productive lives, both were prolific writers, who produced hundreds of articles, papers and reviews, some covering hundreds of pages, others just a few lines (for Uhlenbeck, see Bakker and Hinrichs 2009; for Schuchardt, see Spitzer 1928:15-50). They regularly commented on each other’s work, and it may be interesting to track down some of the debate.

Schuchardt did not review Uhlenbeck’s first more extensive publication on Basque, his 1892 *Baskische Studien*, but instead published a book with the same title in the following year (Schuchardt 1893a), but with the addition of a Roman numeral “I” to the title. Schuchardt did react to Uhlenbeck’s (1893a) article on Germanic loans in Basque (1893b). Uhlenbeck had an extensive knowledge of Germanic languages. He had published several solutions to etymological problems in Germanic, and a few years later he would publish his etymological dictionary of Gothic.

In 1893, Uhlenbeck pointed to trade contacts between the Basques and Germanic peoples from the 14th century, and he had identified 27 words as being of Germanic origin, including (*g*)*arratoi* ‘rat’, *arrano* ‘eagle’, *anka* ‘leg, hip’, *ehun* ‘hundred’, *urki* ‘birch’,

linking them with Old High German or Gothic. Even though Uhlenbeck only mentioned contacts from the 14th century, the forms of the loans make it clear that virtually all must go back much earlier.

Schuchardt criticized some of Uhlenbeck's etymologies, even though he accepted the presence of early Germanic borrowings as such into Basque. He does not consider the contacts extensive enough that Basque would even have borrowed the word for 'often' (B. *maiz*, supposedly from Gothic *mais* 'more'), especially since there is also a Romance word *ma(g)is* with the same meaning. He also believes the word for 'cherry' *gerezi*, *altz* 'alder tree' to be Romance. In addition, he provides additional Romance languages that would have been sources for the ultimately Germanic words. He rejects, for different reasons, the Germanic sources for *arrano* 'eagle', *burdin* 'iron', *karazko* 'fit', *urki* 'birch' and perhaps *ehun* 'hundred'. He accepts direct borrowing from Germanic only for *gudu* 'struggle, battle', *garnu* 'urine', *eskatu* 'demand, request' and *zillar* 'silver'. He also points out that some words are more likely from Anglosaxon (who controlled parts of Lapurdi for an extended period), such as *gudu* 'war' < Anglosaxon *guð*, *eskatu* 'ask', *zillar* < *silver* and perhaps also *saldu* 'sell' < *sell*. He identifies the word for 'young woman', *lufa*, as a ghost word.

Uhlenbeck (1894a) accepted Schuchardt's Romance etymologies for *laido*, *anka*, *eskela* and *gurruntzi*, but stuck to his own for *altz*, *bargo*, *ezten*, *eskatu*, *urki* and *landa*. In Uhlenbeck (1894b) he discussed two further words with a Germanic-Basque connection. The word for 'bay' is widespread in Romance, eg. Spanish *bahia*, Italian *baja*, French *baie*. Uhlenbeck assumes that the Basque word *bai* is indigenous, with the meaning 'harbour', but he does not state an opinion as to whether it is cognate with the Romance words. The Dutch word *kabeljauw* 'cod' (1894b:328), earlier discussed in more detail in 1892 (1892d), dates from the Middle Ages and is the source of the Basque word *bakallao*. The metathesis was performed in Basque, not in Germanic: Dutch *bakeljauw* (17th century) was borrowed from Basque in that form.

Schuchardt reacted again (1894b). He is happy that Uhlenbeck accepts some of his alternatives. He discusses in detail the possibilities for the etymology of *landa* 'arable land': according to Uhlenbeck it is Gothic *landa* 'land', but other possibilities are the indigenous Basque word *lan* 'work' or Latin *planta* 'plant, to plant'. Schuchardt assumes a blend of both words. Schuchardt also discusses Uhlenbeck's rejection of his alternative etymology for Basque *ezten* 'spear, awl': not Gothic *stains*, but possibly Spanish *lesna* 'awl'. The lack of "sound laws" does not strike Schuchardt as crucial, since Basque intonation is not well known, and sound laws often do not apply in borrowings. He takes Uhlenbeck's discussion of *bai* seriously, and speculates that Basque *kai* 'dock' may be cognate with words like French *quai*, Provençal *cai*, *quèi*, Dutch *kaai*, *kade* and German *Kai*. With regard to *bakallao* and *kabeljauw*, Schuchardt points out that the Basque word could be related to the word for stick *makila* (from Latin *bacillum*), the same source as the first part of the Dutch and German word for the fish *Stokvis*, *Stockfisch* (literally 'stick fish') respectively, which also means 'stick'. And, for that matter, also in Russian *treska*, meaning both

‘stick’ and ‘codfish’, and *kobél*, *kobl*, *kobljúch* also mean ‘stick’, as pointed out by Uhlenbeck (1892d:228). In 1932 Uhlenbeck (1932c:126) considered the issue settled in a paper by Kluyver (1927). For words for ‘codfish’, see also Sayers (2002).

Uhlenbeck had proposed his Dutch source for the Basque word *bacallao* (modern spelling *bakalau*) in 1892 (1892d), when he had suggested that the Dutch word had been borrowed from Russian, where *treska* means both ‘stick’ and ‘codfish’, and where the words *kobel*, *kobl* and *kobljúch* are normal words for ‘stick’ and ‘pole’ – in fact giving credence to Schuchardt’s connection with Basque *makila* ‘stick’ and the suggestion of a loan translation based on the word for ‘stick’.

Schuchardt assumes that Romance speakers must have played a role in the transmission of the word, or meaning, from Dutch to Basque, because “the Basques only had contact with the Dutch in Spanish or French” (Schuchardt 1895:344). This statement is not backed up, however, and in the light of later research it has become clear that a pidginized form of Basque was in use between Basque whalers and codfishers and the populations of Iceland (Bakker et al. 1991; Bakker 1987; Hualde 1984) and North America (Bakker 1989), and probably elsewhere as well.

8 Languages in contact

One of the main contributions to general linguistics that Schuchardt is known for, is the study of creole languages, mixed languages and other results of language contact. Several anthologies and translations of Schuchardt’s creolist works have appeared in recent decades (e.g. Markey 1979; Gilbert 1981; Schuchardt 1979, 1980). Uhlenbeck had only a marginal interest in it. When he reviewed Van Wijk’s introduction to structuralist phonology (1939), his only point of criticism was that Van Wijk wrote nothing about the phonology of mixed languages:

Ten slotte een wensch. Moge de Schrijver in een tweede editie van zijn werk ook eenige aandacht schenken aan taalmenging en creolizeering. Wij willen zoo gaarne weten, wat er gebeurt, als twee geheel verschillende fonologische systemen met elkaar in botsing komen en zich tot een nieuw systeem vereenigen. (1939:277)⁷

Language contact was also put forward by Uhlenbeck in order to explain a number of phenomena in Basque. He had repeatedly pointed out the extensive lexical influence from the Romance languages and pre-Latin loans from other branches of Indo-European and Berber.

Uhlenbeck was also keenly aware of areal influences on grammatical systems as an aspect of language contact.

In his last major paper on Basque, published in French in the newly started journal *Lingua*, Uhlenbeck described Basque as a “*langue mixte*”, because of the strong influence from Latin and the Romance languages. The label of “mixed language” must be taken

to mean a language thoroughly influenced by others, rather than in a more exclusive definition (as in Matras and Bakker 2003).

9 Uhlenbeck and ergativity

Uhlenbeck was one of the first to ponder about ergativity in a comparative way. Ergative languages can be contrasted with accusative languages. In accusative languages, the subject of a transitive sentence and an intransitive sentence are expressed in the same way (e.g. English: ‘*he goes*’, ‘*he sees her*’), but the object has a different form (‘*she sees him*’). In ergative languages, the subject of an intransitive sentence (‘*he goes*’) is expressed with the same form as the object of a transitive sentence (e.g. pseudo-English: ‘*he goes*’, ‘*him sees he*’). Ergativity is often expressed in case-marking, often also in verbal morphology.

Having studied Basque and Greenlandic, both ergative languages, and also having encountered the phenomenon in many other languages (e.g. Caucasian languages), Uhlenbeck was the first one to suggest that Proto-Indo-European may have been an ergative language, based on its case marking. He first said so in an article in the Dutch periodical *Museum* in 1898, but the idea first drew attention after his 1901 article in the leading international journal *Indogermanische Forschungen* (amendment 1902a) (see also Genee 2003). When Uhlenbeck later found out that A.F. Pott in 1873 had already suggested something along those lines, including parallels with Basque and Greenlandic, he published a brief paper to report this “so ausgezeichneten Sprachforscher zum Teil meinen Vorläufer nennen zu dürfen” (1909:197).

10 Conclusion

The Basque language was a *Leitmotiv* in Uhlenbeck’s linguistic career. There is no doubt that Uhlenbeck loved the Basque language. He used epitheta like “wundervol” [‘miraculous’] (1926:351).

Uhlenbeck had studied the Basque language extensively from a variety of written sources, including older texts, and he had read other scholars’ work on comparisons of Basque with other languages. Uhlenbeck did not hide his opinion of his colleagues’ works in his reviews. He always praises Schuchardt (e.g. 1901b) and Julio de Urquijo (e.g. 1923d). He is less enthusiastic about Trombetti, the man who found links between Basque and languages from all parts of the world. Uhlenbeck encounters many “problems” in his publications, despite the fact that his work makes a very scholarly impression (1926). He finds the question of the origin of Basque “ever hopeless”, especially as long as we lack good descriptions of most languages. He finds Trombetti’s proposals “doubtful”. Oštir – he was mentioned above as well – takes earlier work into account, but he lacks self-criticism, despite his keen eye and scholarship. Uhlenbeck expresses mixed feelings about Urtel’s work on “onomatopoesis” – roughly, ideophones and reduplication. Gavel is praised for his research on Basque phonetics (Uhlenbeck 1923d).

Uhlenbeck had extensive knowledge of a great range of languages from other parts of the world, especially Eurasia and the Americas. Apart from the language groups he published on himself (Basque, Indo-European, Uralic, Algonquian), he reviewed publications on several dozens of other languages from all parts of the world, especially from California, the Northwest coast and interior North America, Central America, South America (Brazil, Columbia, Peru and elsewhere), India and Oceanic languages.

Uhlenbeck was familiar with some of the literature about archaeology and anthropology relating to the Basques. Toward the end of his life, he produced a synthesis of his view of the origin and history of the Basque language (1940-1941a, 1942, 1949).

Basque had been spoken in the Western Pyrenees since time immemorial. When the Iberians immigrated from Africa, the language came under its influence. This explains lexical similarities of Basque with North African languages, and the similarities between Basque and Iberian declination. After that, there was some limited Indo-European influence on Basque, most likely Celtic, and there was also influence from Old Germanic, perhaps Gothic. This was overshadowed by extensive influence from Latin and later the Romance languages.

Uhlenbeck's work on Basque is impressive in its quantity, but less so in its quality. Some of it is more a catalogue of findings than an analysis. He missed much of the Romance influence. Few new insights are presented. He was able to add a great number of observations based on his collection of Basque grammars and books. Many of his books are now in the University Library in Leiden (N.N. 1936). The Uhlenbeck collection includes almanacs, academic studies, religious texts and historical studies from the period 1803-1929. Although he had collected an impressive number of publications in and about Basque, he made use of a limited number of them, mostly the oldest texts available, and publications by fellow bascologists.

During his visit to the Basque Country in 1903, Uhlenbeck heard Basque spoken on both sides of the border, and he tried to practice speaking it – with limited success. He wrote: "My pronunciation is only approximate, because some sounds are difficult to attain. When I thought I was able to produce the postdental *s* exactly like the Basques themselves, they discouraged me by saying 'Vous n'avez pas les mâchoires'." (1906:5).

Some of his students continued with Basque. William Rollo (1882-1954), a Scottish student who had followed classes in philology with Uhlenbeck, was inspired by his teacher to study Basque, and he spent two summers in the field in the early 1920s. This culminated in a dissertation on the Basque dialect of Markina defended in Leiden in 1925 (Rollo 1925), which Uhlenbeck reviewed (1926-1927). He praised the book and the author, but he misses a thorough discussion of the accent (75 years later this gap was filled: see Hualde 2000). Rollo became professor of linguistics in South Africa. Nicolaas G.H. Deen had conducted fieldwork on Basque, at the instigation of Uhlenbeck, in Getaria in the 1920s (Knörr 2007), but apart from a few translations of fiction from French, not much is known about his further life. Neither one of these students pursued a career in Basque linguistics.

Uhlenbeck's research program on Basque, and also his studies of other languages, was in a way quite modern. In a Basque context, it was perhaps most explicitly formulated in (1940-1941a). He started with an interest in *Urverwandschaft*, let us say historical-comparative linguistics. Then he realized that it is more important to discover the phonological, morphological and syntactic similarities of languages and language families, let us say typology. This should be done in connection with historical-genetic research. This view means that one has to take language contact into account: borrowings, and the direction of borrowing, perhaps even language mixture connected to acculturation, as well as influences from substrata, superstrata and adstrata. Only in that way one can distinguish the original *Ursprache*. In such a way one can also identify linguistic areas. Uhlenbeck even questions the existence of language families that have come into being by differentiation. For an insightful analysis of Uhlenbeck's philosophical underpinnings based on his work on languages other than Basque, see Genee (2003).

Uhlenbeck wrote or had published his papers in French, German, plus a few in Spanish and English, but most of them were in Dutch. Even though many of his Dutch and German papers were translated into French or Spanish, it was not always easy for scholars to gain access to them. Occasionally, Uhlenbeck lamented the fact that some scholar did not know certain publications of his, which led him to a complaint: "*Batava non leguntur*" (1923a:13 n. 1), 'Dutch is not read'. Or when read, not understood. When Nikolaj Marr had devoted an article to Uhlenbeck's works on Basque (1926), he wrote that Marr "provides convincing proof that he does not understand Dutch" (1932c:125). Hopefully this paper may act as a guide to Uhlenbeck's work on Basque.

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APPENDIX

Uhlenbeck's 1888 *stelling* ['statements'] on Basque (my translation from Dutch):

VII

Basque is unjustifiedly considered by Charencey (La langue basque et les idiomes de l'Oural) and Bonaparte (La langue basque et les langues finnoises) to be a Finno-Ugric language.

VIII

Proto-Basque already had an incorporating conjugation.

IX

Old Basque *k-* in the beginning of words has gone over to *h-* in all dialects and has subsequently disappeared in the dialects of Gipuzkoa and Bizkaia. However, when a word starting with *k-* in old Basque constituted the second part of a compound, the *k* was preserved.

X

The Basque word *kide* 'like' acquired the original *k* through the influence of the compound *adiskide*, where the *k*, being in the middle of a word, was preserved. On the other hand the forms *hide* and *habi* have had the effect that the forms are *aurhide* and *chorihabi* (beside the correct form *chorikabi*).

XI

Basque *da* 'he/she/it is' is the third person pronoun, which is incidentally only found as verbal prefix.

XII

The Basque verbs *hartu* 'to take' and *ekartu* 'to carry' are related to one another.

NOTES

¹ French and Spanish translations of Uhlenbeck's works are not listed here. They can be found in the bibliography of Uhlenbeck's writings in Bakker and Hinrichs 2009. All translations in this paper of quotes from Dutch, French and German are mine. I am grateful to Inge Genee, Jan Paul Hinrichs, Henrike Knörr (†) and Hein van der Voort for their critical comments on an earlier version. Further I would like to thank Mary Eggermont-Molenaar and Jan Noordegraaf for help with Uhlenbeck's correspondence and Pruden Gartzia Isasti, director of the Azkue Bibliothekoa (Bilbao) for making correspondence by Uhlenbeck available from the collection Lacombe, owned by the Olaso Dorrea Foundation.

² You can mention my *Baskische Studien*, but adding that those studies just represent youthful dreams. I have not rejected all the ideas found there; but there is nothing in *Baskische Studien* that I would be able to state today without reservations. Basque is not related to Indo-European.'

³ 'Research on the etymology of words remains too dependent of subjective views and tendencies, and in the end in most of the cases nobody can say that it is his own opinion that is the right one.'

⁴ 'Since 1890 I have not written anything from which one could conclude that I would be inclined to connect Basque with Indo-European. Instead I have publicly denounced such a presumed connection since. My publications that have appeared after 1900 have in no way implied to place Basque into any language family, but rather to explain the isolate as much as possible from a language-internal perspective.'

⁵ 'It would actually be better, not to write anything. One is only misunderstood, especially when one occasionally points to parallel phenomena in unrelated languages.'

⁶ 'There are undeniable points of contact between the lexicons of Basque and Hamitic [a former name for the non-Semitic languages of the Afro-Asiatic family – P.B.] and Gutmann should have referred not only to the representatives of the Ural-Altaic hypothesis, but also to Hamiticists like Giacomino and Von der Gabelentz. Also the quiet statements by Schuchardt about the problems of the affinity of Basque would have deserved consideration. This said, it should not be taken as a claim that I consider the Semitic-Hamitic origin of Basque to be certain, or the Ural-Altaic affiliation to be ruled out, but for the time being I deny, however, that it is better to turn to Africa than to the steppes and tundras. In any case I would like to warn against a too unbalanced judgment on Basque. If one wants to add a hitherto isolated dialect group to Ural-Altaic, then one would succeed more easily with the Eskimo languages than with Basque.'

⁷ 'Finally a wish. Hopefully the author will devote some attention to creolization and language mixture in a second edition of his work. We would love to know what happens when two widely different phonological systems collide and unify into a new system.'