

# Concerning the differential morphosyntactic marking of definiteness on Basque anthroponyms: A synchronic and diachronic study

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Iker Salaberri, Patxi Salaberri & Juan José Zubiri

*Public University of Navarre (UPNA/NUP)*

iker.salaberri@unavarra.es, salaberri@unavarra.es, jjzubiri@unavarra.es

Despite the fact that the use of the definite article (singular *-a*, plural *-ak*) with nouns and adjectives is widespread in Basque, this is not at all the case concerning anthroponyms: this last group presents – aside from a few exceptions – considerable difficulties for the addition of the definite article, regardless of whether female or male, native or foreign person names, hypocoristics or full forms are involved. Names such as Ane (female), Mikel (male), Haritz (native), Jordi (foreign), Kotte (hypocoristic) and Dolores (full form) as opposed to \*Anea(k), \*Mikela(k), \*Haritza(k), \*Jordia(k), \*Kottea(k) and \*Doloresa(k) serve as examples of this difficulty. Therefore, the claim can be made that, in general terms, the use of the definite article with anthroponyms is avoided in Basque.

In spite of this there are names which, owing to specific circumstances, tolerate the definite article: these are hypocoristics like Martino > Martinoa, Josepatxo > Josepatxoa and foreign trade names such as Toyota > Toyota(k). There is also the fact that the acceptability of such forms varies dialectally and that this acceptability could be due to historical reasons: in fact, in medieval documents one finds attestations of anthroponyms with the definite article, such as Franciscoa and Jesusa.

In view of this state of affairs, the present study addresses the question to what degree the use of the definite article with Basque person names varies diachronically and diatopically. A typology of names is furthermore laid out, which is meant to clarify how often the definite article co-occurs with specific kinds of onyms. The authors expect to attain, in this manner, a clear overview of the relationship between Basque anthroponyms and hypocoristics, on the one hand, and their morphosyntactic marking for definiteness, on the other.