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# The category of number in Basque:

## I. Synchronic and historical aspects

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### 0. INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

This article, which is divided into two parts, is an attempt to discuss the present, the history and the proto-history of the category of grammatical number in Basque. The first is published in this volume of *Fontes Linguae Vasconum*, and the second will be published in the following volume.

The organization of the paper will be as follows. In point 1 (in this volume), I describe how the category of number works in contemporary standard Basque, with some limited references to (also contemporary) dialectal peculiarities. I also discuss which number marking morphs we find across the morphology on nouns, demonstratives, pronouns and verbal forms. In point 2 (also in this volume), I present some historical facts underlying the morphs described in point 1 as attested in documents from previous centuries, as well as on place-names, inscriptions and the like. I also attempt a brief explanation of the possible development those morphs underwent in historical phases. In point 3 (in the second part of the article, to be published in the next volume of this magazine), I shall discuss the development of the category as a

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whole and its possible original (pre-historical) status according to the internal evidence and the data offered by linguistic typology. Point 4 (also in the second part of the article) will be a confrontation of the facts and perspectives outlined throughout the previous points with typological generalizations made in the most recent typological research, followed by a final reflection. Points 1 through 3 are further divided into five subpoints: nouns, demonstratives, interrogative/relative and indefinite pronouns, personal pronouns, and finite verbal forms. These correspond to each sector of the grammar susceptible to taking some kind of number marking.

I think that the article may be of interest to Basque historical linguists as well as typologists or general linguists interested in typological facts. To accommodate a broader audience, I have presented the synchronic facts in point 1, and explained which our philological sources are in point 2, assuming neither any previous knowledge of the language nor of Basque philology in general. Readers experienced in the grammar of Basque can skip point 1, although I would not recommend them doing the same with point 2, for here I already enter the historical discussion proper.

## 1. THE CATEGORY OF NUMBER ON BASQUE NOUNS, DEMONSTRATIVES, PRONOUNS AND VERBS

### 1.1. Nouns

Basque has the following noun declension for a vowel-ending noun like *mendi* 'mountain'<sup>2</sup>:

Table 1. Noun declension of vowel-ending nouns

	<u>Sg.</u>	<u>Pl.</u>	<u>Indef.</u>
Abs.	<i>mendi-a</i>	<i>mendi-ak</i>	<i>zein mendi?</i>
Erg.	<i>mendi-ak</i>	<i>mendi-ek</i>	<i>zein mendi-k?</i>
Gen.	<i>mendi-aren</i>	<i>mendi-en</i>	<i>zein mendi-ren?</i>
Dat.	<i>mendi-ari</i>	<i>mendi-ei</i>	<i>zein mendi-ri?</i>
Inst.	<i>mendi-az</i>	<i>mendi-ez</i>	<i>zein mendi-z?</i>
Ines.	<i>mendi-an</i>	<i>mendi-etan</i>	<i>zein mendi-tan?</i>
Loc.-gen.	<i>mendi-ko</i>	<i>mendi-etako</i>	<i>zein mendi-tako?</i>
Allat.	<i>mendi-ra</i>	<i>mendi-etara</i>	<i>zein mendi-tara?</i>
Abl.	<i>mendi-tik</i>	<i>mendi-etatik</i>	<i>zein mendi-tatik?</i>
Partit.	<i>mendi-rik</i> (not assigned to any number value)		

<sup>2</sup> I base on Trask (1997: 82-123), that is, on the chapter called "A thumbnail sketch of the language". Another practical handbook about the grammar of Basque in English is Hualde & Ortiz de Urbina (2003). Examples and more extensive explanations of the parameters that I will discuss here can be easily found in these two works. The abbreviations that I use, and that I shall use in the whole of the paper, are the following: sg. = singular; pl. = plural, indef. = indefinite; abs. = absolutive; erg. = ergative; gen. = genitive; dat. = dative; inst. = instrumental; ines. = inesive (or locative); loc.-gen. = locative genitive; allat. = allative; abl. = ablative; partit. = partitive. This is in any case not the whole declension. There are a few more cases that I have left out because they derive from these primary cases and are not crucial for the problem of number. For instance, the comitative (outside B) is *-arekin* (sg.), but this is most probably a case formed by means of a combination with the gen.: < \**gizon-are(n) kide(a)n* (*kide* 'mate, company') (see Mitxelena 1977 [1961]: 122). The syntactic uses of each case will be evaded too and can be consulted in the works just referred.

Therefore, there are three overt numbers in the noun morphology. The sg. has a somewhat wider meaning than the sg. in Spanish or English (see 2.1.1.). Both the sg. and the pl. typically refer to definite concepts. The indef. (in Basque, *mugagabe* “without limit”) is in structural contrast to them in the sense that it refers to undetermined concepts, not to particular ones that we know of or have just spoken about. Compare (1a) to (1b):

- (1) a. *Bi mendi-ak ikus-i d-it-u-t*  
 two mountain-ABS.PL see-PF. PRES.-abs.3pl.-vb.root-erg.1sg.  
 ‘I have seen the two mountains’  
 b. *Bi mendi ikus-i d-it-u-t*  
 two mountain see-PF. PRES.-abs.3pl.-vb.root-erg.1sg.  
 ‘I have seen two mountains’

Some pronouns like *zein* ‘which’ and *edozein* ‘any’ require indef. number on the modified noun:

- (2) a. *Zein mendi ikus-i d-u-zu?*  
 which mountain see-PF. PRES.-vb. root-erg.2sg.  
 ‘Which mountain have you seen?’  
 b. *Edozein filme gusta-tzen zai-t*  
 any film like-IPF. PRES.-dat.1sg.  
 ‘I like any film’

Sentences like *\*\*zein mendi-a ikusi duzu?* or *\*\*edozein filme-a gustatzen zait* would be ungrammatical. There is no morphological distinction between sg. and pl. inside the indef. number. The noun phrase *zein mendi* in (2a) can be interpreted as either sg. or pl. depending on the context, or by means of the verbal agreement: *zein mendi ikusi duzu?* ‘which mountain have you seen?’, as opposed to *zein mendi ikusi dituzu?* ‘which mountains have you seen?’. The partit. is typically assigned to undetermined direct objects of negative (and interrogative) sentences, and it has no morphological marking for the sg./pl. opposition. It has always sg. agreement on the verb:

- (3) *Ez du-t mendi-rik ikus-i*  
 not PRES.-erg.1sg. mountain-PARTIT. see-PF.  
 ‘I have not seen any mountain(s)’  
 Let us look at the paradigm of a consonant-ending noun like *hitz* ‘word’:

Table 2. Noun declension of consonant-ending nouns

	<u>Sg.</u>	<u>Pl.</u>	<u>Indef.</u>
Abs.	<i>hitz-a</i>	<i>hitz-ak</i>	<i>zein hitz?</i>
Erg.	<i>hitz-ak</i>	<i>hitz-ek</i>	<i>zein hitz-ek?</i>
Gen.	<i>hitz-aren</i>	<i>hitz-en</i>	<i>zein hitz-en?</i>
Dat.	<i>hitz-ari</i>	<i>hitz-ei</i>	<i>zein hitz-i?</i>
Inst.	<i>hitz-az</i>	<i>hitz-ez</i>	<i>zein hitz-ez?</i>
Ines.	<i>hitz-e-an</i>	<i>hitz-etan</i>	<i>zein hitz-e-tan?</i>
Loc.-gen.	<i>hitz-e-ko</i>	<i>hitz-etako</i>	<i>zein hitz-e-tako?</i>
Allat.	<i>hitz-e-ra</i>	<i>hitz-etara</i>	<i>zein hitz-e-tara?</i>
Abl.	<i>hitz-e-tik</i>	<i>hitz-etatik</i>	<i>zein hitz-e-tatik?</i>
Partit.	<i>hitz-ik</i> (not assigned to any number value)		

Here, the case forms are the same as on vowel-ending nouns in the sg. and pl. numbers, but the indef. cases have no independent form: they are like the plural (except for the abs. and the dat.). However, we must notice that the *-e-* of the plural forms is epenthetic.

I chose inanimate nouns to represent case forms because some cases cannot be suffixed to animate nouns, so a complete figure of the casual/number system could not be brought together with an animate noun. In particular, animate nouns like *gizon* ‘man’ usually can not take ines., loc.-gen., allat. or abl.<sup>3</sup>. This duality is related to the formal duality seen in the different forms of the paradigms. If we look at them (see Table 2), we can see that in the first five (abs.-inst.) the sg. has the element *-a(r)-*, whereas in the rest of them (leaving the partit. aside) the pl. has the element *-eta-*. These four with *-eta-* are the so called local cases. The ines. case is somehow in the middle of both groups. Looking at the paradigm of vowel-ending consonants’ paradigm, we see that the ines. sg. lines up with the animates by sharing *-a-* with them. This, whatever its origin, may be interpreted as the article. However, in the pl. it lines up with the local cases, for it has *-eta-*. The historical reasons underlying these phenomena will be discussed in 2.1.1., 2.1.3., and 2.1.4. The morphology of the indef. forms, and the difference between vowel- and consonant-ending nouns in this respect will be commented on in 2.1.6.

The declension of proper names is also peculiar<sup>4</sup>:

Table 3. Declension of proper nouns (vowel- and consonant-ending)

	<u>Vowel-ending stems</u>	<u>Consonant-ending stems</u>
Abs.	<i>Elorrio</i>	<i>Gasteiz</i>
Erg.	<i>Elorrio-k</i>	<i>Gasteiz-e-k</i>
Gen.	<i>Elorrio-ren</i>	<i>Gasteiz-en</i>
Dat.	<i>Elorrio-ri</i>	<i>Gasteiz-i</i>
Inst.	<i>Elorrio-z</i>	<i>Gasteiz-e-z</i>
Ines.	<i>Elorrio-n</i>	<i>Gasteiz-e-n</i>
Loc.-gen.	<i>Elorrio-ko</i>	<i>Gasteiz-e-ko</i> (- <i>Gasteiz-ko</i> )
Allat.	<i>Elorrio-ra</i>	<i>Gasteiz-e-ra</i> (- <i>Gasteiz-a</i> )
Abl.	<i>Elorrio-tik</i>	<i>Gasteiz-e-tik</i> (- <i>Gasteiz-tik</i> )

Throughout these examples, the added element seems to be the pure case-suffix mark: *-Ø*, *-k*, *-en*, *-i*, *-z*, *-n*, *-ko*, *-ra*, *-tik*. In non-local forms (and also in the ines.), the article morph *-a-* that appears on common nouns is not present: *Elorrio* / *mendi-a*, *Elorrio-k* / *mendi-a-k*... Suffixes beginning with vowel in general follow this pure case-suffix principle when they are added to consonant-ending stems: *Gasteiz-en*, *Gasteiz-i*. But when added to vowel-ending stems an *-r-* appears, preventing vowels from coming together in a

<sup>3</sup> In order to say ‘in the man’, ‘to the man’, ‘from the man’, one can use sub-cases which are derived from the gen.: *gizon-aren-ga-n*, *gizon-aren-ga-n-a*, *gizon-aren-ga-n-dik*. For the loc.-gen. (a term that I borrow from Trask 1997), the gen. is used. For the uses and differences between the gen. and loc.-gen., see Trask (1997: 92-94) and Hualde (2003a: 142 ff.). In the latter, the different possibilities for some cases on proper nouns like *Gasteiz-e-ko* and *Gasteiz-ko* are explained in detail. As the issue is not directly related to number, I shall skip it here.

<sup>4</sup> *Elorrio* is a small town in Biscay and *Gasteiz* the Basque name of Vitoria, the provincial capital of Araba. I have taken the example from Trask (1997: 96). See also Hualde (2003a: 140).

diphthong: *Elorrio-r-en*. On the contrary, the loc.-gen., allat. and abl. forms are homophonous with the ones of common nouns, for these do not take *-a-* to form the sg.; the case-marks are directly added.

Finally, Western varieties have a distinct proximate plural with the form *-ok*, which appears mostly with animate nouns: *gizon-ak* ‘the men’, but *gizon-ok* ‘we men’ or ‘you men’, depending on the context. The suffix is *-ok* both in the abs. and in the erg., and in the oblique cases the *-o-* replaces the *-e-*: *gizon-on* ‘of us/you men’, *gizon-oi* ‘to us/you men’, and so on (see Hualde 2003a: 136-139).

## 1.2. Demonstratives

In Basque, there are three demonstratives corresponding to three distance grades. The three have stem suppletion: proximal *hau* (abs.sg.) - *hon-* (in the rest of the sg. cases) - *haue-* (in all the pl. cases) ‘this/these’; mesial *hori* (abs.sg.) - *horr-* (in the rest of the sg. cases) - *ho(r)ie-* (in all the pl. cases) ‘that/those’; distal *hura* (abs.sg.) - *har-* (in the rest of the sg. cases) - *haie-* ‘that/those (far from the speaker)’. Let us look at the paradigm of one of them (the proximal):

Table 4. Declension of 1<sup>st</sup> grade demonstrative

	<u>Sg.</u>	<u>Pl.</u>
Abs.	<i>hau</i>	<i>hau-ek</i>
Erg.	<i>hon-ek</i>	<i>hau-ek</i>
Gen.	<i>hon-en</i>	<i>hau-en</i>
Dat.	<i>hon-i</i>	<i>hau-ei</i>
Inst.	<i>hon-etaz</i>	<i>hau-etaz</i>
Ines.	<i>hon-etan</i>	<i>hau-etan</i>
Loc.-gen.	<i>hon-etako</i>	<i>hau-etako</i>
Allat.	<i>hon-etara</i>	<i>hau-etara</i>
Abl.	<i>hon-etatik</i>	<i>hau-etatik</i>

There are no indef. forms or partit. case here, because demonstratives are definite in themselves. The other two grades (the mesial and the distal) show the same declension, with their respective stems. Compared to the noun declension, two things are remarkable: 1) the sg. forms take the same endings as the indef. forms of the nouns; 2) the abs.pl. has *-ek*, not *-ak*<sup>5</sup>.

## 1.3. Interrogative/relative and indefinite pronouns

This heading includes a series of pronouns sharing the common feature of requiring the indef. number in the phrase and on the nouns modified by them. Some examples are:

(4) <i>nor</i> ‘who (interr./relat.)’	East. <i>anitz</i> ‘many, much’
<i>zer</i> ‘what (interr./relat.)’	<i>hainbeste</i> ‘so many/much’
<i>zein</i> ‘which one’	<i>zerbait</i> ‘something’
<i>zenbat</i> ‘how many/much’	<i>zenbat</i> ‘some’
<i>asko</i> ‘very; many/much’	<i>hainbat</i> ‘so many/much; ‘quite many/much’

<sup>5</sup> Besides, the suffix *-eta* has extended to the inst., both sg. and pl. The inst. suffix, then, has the same form as animates in nouns but the same as local cases in demonstratives. See Trask (1997: 206), Hualde (2003a: 136-137, 141) and Azkarate & Altuna (2001: 101-103).

<i>aski</i> ‘quite, quite many/much’	<i>ugari</i> ‘abundant, many/much’
<i>gutxi</i> (East. <i>guti</i> ) ‘few, little; small’	<i>nahiko(a)</i> ‘enough’
<i>gehiago</i> ‘more’	East. <i>oro</i> ‘every’ <sup>6</sup>
<i>gutxiago</i> ‘less, fewer’	

The first ones of these (up to *zein* in the left-hand column) are interrogative/relative pronouns. *Zein* is the only one that can modify another noun, and must precede it. The rest of the words are quantifiers or qualifiers. Some must precede the noun they modify (*hainbeste etxe* ‘so many houses’), while others must follow it (*etxe gutxi* ‘few houses’). Still others admit both possibilities, especially in Eastern dialects: *etxe anitz - anitz etxe* ‘many houses’.

When any of these indef. items modifies a noun in a noun phrase, the noun requires indefinite number: *zein gizon?* ‘which man/men?’ (\*\**zein gizon-a*, \*\**zein gizon-ak*). These noun phrases will be unspecified for the number, unless the semantics of the pronoun itself specifies its number (i.e., *zenbait* ‘some’ is by itself pl.). The value of this category will be assigned by the context or the verbal agreement:

- (5) a. *Zein*            *gizon(-e)-k*            *esan*            *du-Ø*            *hori?*  
           which            man(-ep.)-ERG.    say-PF.        PRES-erg.3sg.    that  
           ‘Which man has said that?’
- b. *Zein*            *gizon(-e)-k*            *esan*            *du-te*            *hori?*  
           which            man(-ep.)-ERG.    say-PF.        PRES-erg.3pl.    that  
           ‘Which men have said that?’

The syntactic behaviour of East. *oro* is quite remarkable. It is by itself indef., and it forms indef. noun phrases whether or not it modifies a noun: *oro* ‘everything’, *gizon oro* ‘every man/men (abs.)’, *gizon oro-ren* ‘of every man/men’. Semantically these are usually collective or plural, but their agreement on the verb, when there is one, must be sg.: *gizon oro hilkorr-a da* ‘every man is mortal’. Nonetheless, *oro* can also modify nouns or pronouns with pl. marking. In this case, they should be interpreted as appositions, for the case mark is marked on both, the noun being pl., *oro* indef.:

- (6) *gizon-ak oro* ‘every men (abs.)’  
       *gizon-ek oro-k* ‘every men (erg.)’  
       *mendi hori-etan oro-tan* ‘in all those mountains’

In Biscayan, *nor-tzuk* ‘who (pl.)’ and *zein-tzuk* ‘which (pl.)’ are also employed. They are formed by the addition of a pluralizing suffix –composed by the agglomeration of two pluralizing suffixes (see 2.1.)– to the (in itself indef.) pronoun. This suffixing process is clearly a device to avoid any possible ambiguity that the indef. morphology might create. They cannot modify another noun (\*\**zein-tzuk gizon*), but the semantics is unequivocally pl., and so should the verbal agreement, if there is any.

<sup>6</sup> I have left out some others of clear Romanic origin, like *dezente* ‘quite many/much’, and some others with a structure /noun + *bat* ‘one’, most of them with an abundantial meaning: *pilo bat*, *mordo bat*, *makina bat*, all these meaning ‘plenty of’. They require indef. number too: *makina bat liburu* ‘plenty of books’.



In the rest of the cases (the indef. ones seen above: *zein*, *zenbat*, *gutxiago*, *anitz*...), and even in NPs where a semantically pl. number modifies an indef. noun, the grammar of the modern standard language admits the possibility of both a sg. and of a pl. agreement on the verb: *gizon asko etorri da/dira* ‘plenty of men have come’, *bi gizon etorri da/dira* ‘two men have come’. However, the prevailing tendency today –especially in non-Eastern varieties– is to make the agreement *ad sensum*, so that if an indef. noun phrase is semantically pl., the corresponding verbal agreement will also be pl.: *gizon asko etorri dira*, *bi gizon etorri dira*.

#### 1.4. Personal pronouns

Modern Basque dialects have the following 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> personal pronouns (only abs. non-intensive forms are given):

Table 5. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> personal pronouns

<i>ni</i>	‘I’
<i>hi</i>	‘you (intimate)’
<i>zu</i>	‘you (formal, sg.)’
<i>gu</i>	‘we’
<i>zuek</i>	‘you (pl.)’

As Trask (1997: 96) points out, the Western dialects alone have third-person pronouns (*bera* ‘s/he, it’, *berak* or *eurak* ‘they’), whereas other dialects use demonstratives as third-person pronouns (*hura* ‘s/he, it’, *haiek* ‘they’).

1.5. *Finite verb-forms*. Basque has two kinds of verb formations (see Trask 1997: 102 ff., Hualde & Oyarçabal & Ortiz de Urbina 2003, Hualde 2003b: 162 ff.). One is the periphrastic formation. Every verb can be formed by means of it, and it is composed by a non-finite verb (which can be perfective, imperfective or futural, and contains the lexematic root) and a finite verb. This finite verb functions as an auxiliary, bearing the morphs for tense, mood, and the marks for the one, two or three arguments that can correspond to the verb depending on its valency. For instance:

- (7) *ema-ten*      *di-zki-o-t*  
 give-IPF.      PRES-abs.pl.-dat.3sg.-erg.1sg.  
 ‘I give them to him/her’

The other verb formation is the so called synthetic, which can be used only with certain verbs of the basic vocabulary (‘be’, ‘go’, ‘come’, ‘bring’, ‘walk’...) but which are more numerous the further back we move in the history of the language. Synthetic verbs are composed by a single finite form, which bears the morphs for tense and mood, the marks of the one, two or three arguments involved in the action and also the lexical root. For instance:

- (8) *da-bil-tza*  
 PRES.-walk-abs.3pl.  
 ‘They walk’

Our interest here is focused on the argument marks of every finite form both of periphrastic and of synthetic formations, that is, on the morphs bearing the number marks. Basque has four conjugations in either kind of



formation, depending on the arguments involved in the action (see Hualde 2003b, Etxepare 2003). If the action is simple intransitive, it will have just one argument: the NOR (or abs.),<sup>7</sup> as in *na-bil* ‘I walk’, abs.1<sup>st</sup>sg.-WALK. If the action is intransitive but there is a recipient or dative involved, it will have two arguments: the NOR (or abs.) and the NORI (or dat.), like in *na-tor-ki-zue* ‘I come to you (pl.)’, abs.1<sup>st</sup>sg.-COME-(empty.morph)-dat.2<sup>nd</sup>pl. If the action is transitive with no recipient, it will have two arguments: the NOR (or abs.) and the NORK (or erg.), like in *ikus-i na-u-Ø* ‘s/he has seen me’, SEE-pf. abs.1<sup>st</sup>sg.-vb.root-erg.3<sup>rd</sup>sg. Finally, if the action is transitive with recipient, it will have three arguments: the NOR (or abs.), the NORK (or erg.) and the NORI (or dat.), like in *ekarri-ko di-zki-zu-t* ‘I will bring them to you’, BRING-fut. pres.-abs.3<sup>rd</sup>pl.-dat.2<sup>nd</sup>sg.-erg.1<sup>st</sup>sg.<sup>8</sup>

The NOR morpheme surfaces with a variety of forms. The verb *izan* is highly suppletive and deserves a specific comment. This verb is itself a synthetic verb with the meaning ‘be’, but can also be the auxiliary form of intransitive verbs. Its conjugation for the present and the preterite is the following (see also Hualde 2003b: 168):

Table 6. NOR morphemes of the NOR conjugation (present and past tenses)

<i>na-iz</i> ‘I am’	<i>nin-tz-e-n</i> ‘I were’
<i>ha-iz</i> ‘you (intimate) are’	<i>hin-tz-e-n</i> ‘you (int.) were’
<i>da</i> ‘s/he, it is’	<i>z-e-n</i> ‘s/he, it was’
<i>ga-ra</i> ‘we are’	<i>gin-e-n</i> ‘we were’
<i>za-ra</i> ‘you (sg.) are’	<i>zin-e-n</i> ‘you (sg.) were’
<i>za-re-te</i> ‘you (pl.) are’	<i>zin-e-te-n</i> ‘you (pl.) were’
<i>di-ra</i> ‘they are’	<i>zi-r-e-n</i> ‘they were’

Here, the number is overt in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> persons, for in these verbal forms there is a morpheme which clearly resembles the corresponding personal pronoun: *ni* ‘I’ ~ *na-* in the pres., *nin-* in the pret., and so on. This pattern (sometimes with *nen-* for *nin-*) appears in every verb of the NOR conjugation. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> person forms, *d-* in the pres. and *z-* in the pret. are tense morphemes. What is specific of this verb is the opposition 3<sup>rd</sup> sg. *da* / 3<sup>rd</sup> pl. *di-ra*, the origin of which is mysterious.

The conjugation of the synthetic verb *ibili* ‘walk’ is the following:

Table 7. NOR morphemes of the NOR conjugation (present and past tenses)

<i>na-bil</i> ‘I walk’	<i>nen-bil-e-n</i> ‘I walked’
<i>ha-bil</i> ‘you (intimate) walk’	<i>hen-bil-e-n</i> ‘you (int.) walk’
<i>da-bil</i> ‘s/he, it walks’	<i>ze-bil-e-n</i> ‘s/he, it walked’
<i>ga-bil-tza</i> ‘we walk’	<i>gen-bil-tza-n</i> ‘we walked’
<i>za-bil-tza</i> ‘you walk (sg.)’	<i>zen-bil-tza-n</i> ‘you (sg.) walked’
<i>za-bil-tza-te</i> ‘you walk (pl.)’	<i>zen-bil-tza-te-n</i> ‘you walked (pl.)’
<i>da-bil-tza</i> ‘they walk’	<i>ze-bil-tza-n</i> ‘they walked’

<sup>7</sup> NOR, NOR-I and NOR-K are the terms used in Basque to refer to these categories; that is, they stand respectively for abs., dat. and erg. *Nor* means ‘who’, and the marks *-Ø*, *-i* and *-k* correspond respectively to abs., dat. and erg.

<sup>8</sup> These four patterns are called, respectively: NOR, NOR-NORI, NOR-NORK and NOR-NO-RI-NORK.

This is a typical number marking of NOR or abs. morphemes in the NOR conjugation (intransitive action with no recipient). 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person forms have a number marking of the *na-/nen-* type, as discussed. Apart from these, plural forms have a specific suffix, *-tza(-)*, which is only distinctive for the 3<sup>rd</sup> person forms (covert sg.  $\emptyset$  / overt pl. *-tza*). Note that this appears also on the 2<sup>nd</sup> sg. non-intimate form. The reason is that the 2<sup>nd</sup> sg. non-intimate pronoun is historically a plural form (see 2.4.). In order to keep the distinction, the semantically pl. form takes another pl. mark, *-te*, originally from NORK morphemes.

This pattern of number marking for NOR morphemes is basically the same in the NOR, NOR-NORI and NOR-NORK conjugations. In the last two of these, a morpheme NORI or NORK is also embedded in the verb (see Trask 1997: 103-109, Hualde 2003b: 162 ff.). What does change is the form in which the pl. morpheme appears in all these conjugations. This is *-tza(-)* in the verb *ibili* and some others (*da-kar* 's/he brings (one thing)' / *da-kar-tza* 's/he brings (several things)', in the NOR-NORK); but it is *-z(-)* in *joan* 'go' (*doa* 's/he goes' / *doa-z* 'they go') and *eduki* 'have' (*dauka* 's/he has (one thing)' / *dau-z-ka* 's/he has (several things)').

*-zki(-)* is the pl. marker for the NOR in the NOR-NORI conjugation in the standard variety (*gusta-tzen zai-o* 's/he like him, her, it' / *gusta-tzen zai-zki-o* 's/he likes them'), and it has become quite successful in the NOR-NORK in the Guipuzcoan dialect (*dakar-zki* 'he brings (several things)').

Finally, *-it-* is the pl. marker of the verb *ukan*, which can function as the auxiliary verb of NOR-NORK periphrastic formations (*ikus-i na-u* 's/he has seen me' / *ikus-i za-it-u* 's/he has seen you (sg.)'), as well as synthetic verb meaning 'have' (*du* 's/he has (one thing)' / *d-it-u* 's/he has (several things)'). In some pret. forms, the pl. marking morph seems to be just *-t-* vs. voiced *-d-* (*ikus-i nin-d-u-e-n* 's/he saw me' / *ikus-i zin-t-u-e-n* 's/he saw you (sg.)').

In the NOR-NORI-NORK conjugation, in most dialects of any period there are only 3<sup>rd</sup> person morphemes for the NOR. In the standard variety, these surface as sg.  $\emptyset$  / pl. *-zki* (*ema-ten di-o-t* 'I give him/her/it to him/her/it' / *ema-ten di-zki-o-t* 'I give them to him/her/it') (see Hualde 2003b: 165).

The NORK morphemes surface in a remarkable way in the two conjugations which contain them. In pres. tenses, they appear at the end of the verb. The 2<sup>nd</sup> p. (non-intimate) sg. and pl. morphs and the 1<sup>st</sup> p. pl. are of pronominal origin; the 1<sup>st</sup> p. sg. and the 2<sup>nd</sup> p. sg. intimate are different. The 3<sup>rd</sup> person morphs are sg.  $\emptyset$  / pl. *-te*. Thus, the auxiliary forms of the NOR-NORK are the following (the NOR being 3<sup>rd</sup> p. sg.):

Table 8. NORK morphemes of the NOR-NORK conjugation when the NOR morpheme is 3<sup>rd</sup> p. sg. (present tense)

1 <sup>st</sup> sg.	<i>du-t</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> (intim., m./f.) sg.	<i>du-k/-n</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> sg.	<i>du-<math>\emptyset</math></i>
1 <sup>st</sup> pl.	<i>du-gu</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> sg.	<i>du-zu</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> pl.	<i>du-zue</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> pl.	<i>du-te</i>

Several regions of the Basque speaking territory, especially Biscayan and Souletin, have also *-e* instead of *-te* for the mark of 3<sup>rd</sup> p. pl. (Bisc. *dabe* < \**dau-e*, Soul. *die*), and actually this is the same *-e* that marks the 2<sup>nd</sup> pl. erg. *-zu-e*, distinguishing it from the sg. *-zu* (see 2.4.). The same NORK marking appears in the NOR-NORI-NORK. The only difference is that the NORI morpheme is inserted before the NORK morpheme, and that the radical *-u* is transformed into *-i-*: *ema-ten d-u-t* ‘I give it’ > *ema-ten d-i-o-t* ‘I give it to him/her/it’.

In pret. tenses, the NORK morphs can appear at the beginning or at the end of the verb. They appear at the end if the NOR is a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person morph, in which case this occupies the beginning position (being formally like the NOR morphs in the NOR conjugation): *ikus-i zin-tu-da-n* ‘I saw you’, that is, SEE-pf. abs.2<sup>nd</sup>sg.-vb.root-erg.1<sup>st</sup>sg.-pret. (see Trask 1997: 103-109, Hualde 2003b: 165). On the contrary, they appear at the beginning if the NOR is a 3<sup>rd</sup> person morph. In this case, the auxiliary forms of the NOR-NORK are the following:

Table 8. NORK morphemes of the NOR-NORK conjugation when the NOR morpheme is 3<sup>rd</sup> p. sg. (present tense)

1 <sup>st</sup> sg.	<i>n-u-e-n</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> (intim.) sg.	<i>h-u-e-n</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> sg.	<i>z-u-e-n</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> pl.	<i>gen-u-e-n</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> sg.	<i>zen-u-e-n</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> pl.	<i>zen-u-te-n</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> pl.	<i>z-u-te-n</i>

Here, the identification between 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> person NORK morphemes and pronouns is somewhat more opaque, but in any case it is clear that there must be some relation between both, for the first segment is common to both. The *z-* of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person is probably originally a tense or aspect mark (see Trask 1977), and only a reinterpretation has associated it to the 3<sup>rd</sup> person sg. (both abs. and erg.) in pret. tenses. Note that, in the pret., the morpheme that recharacterizes the 2<sup>nd</sup> pl. NORK is *-te*, not *-e*.

The NORK morphs are always at the beginning of the verb in the NOR-NORI-NORK (which is thus turned into NORK-NOR-NORI) of pret. tenses, for in this case the NOR is always 3<sup>rd</sup> person: *ema-ten n-i-o-n* ‘I gave him/her/it’, that is, GIVE-ipf. erg.1<sup>st</sup>sg.-vb.root-dat.3<sup>rd</sup>sg.-pret. (see Trask 1997: 103-109, Hualde 2003b: 165 ff.).

Finally, NORI morphs appear in NOR-NORI and NOR-NORI-NORK conjugations. They occupy the final position in the former (that is, among argument marks, leaving aside modal marks and the *-n* of the past, when these appear: *gustatu-ko l-itza(i)-o-ke* LIKE-fut. condit.part.-vb.root-dat.3<sup>rd</sup>sg.-mod.part. ‘he would like him/her/it’, or *gusta-tu z-itza(i)-da-n* LIKE-pf. pret.-vb.root-dat.1<sup>st</sup>sg.-pret. ‘I liked him/her/it’). In the latter (here too, modal particles and *-n* of the past left aside), they occupy the position before the NORK morph in pres. tenses, and the final position in the pret., since here the NORK morph jumps to the beginning (see Trask 1997: 103-109, Hualde 2003b: 165 ff.). Let us look at an example of either conjugation,

both in the pres. The translation of the forms on the left-hand column is ‘it seems to me, to you (intim.), to him/her/it, ...’, and the one of the forms in the right-hand column ‘they give me, you (intim.), him/her/it..., several things’ (see also Hualde 2003b: 169):

Table 9. NORI morphs in the NOR-NORI and the NOR-NORI-NORK conjugations

NOR-NORI	NOR-NORI-NORK
<i>irudi-tzen za(i)-t̃</i>	<i>ema-ten d-i-zki-da-te</i>
<i>irudi-tzen za(i)-k̃/ñ</i>	<i>ema-ten d-i-zki-a/ñ-te</i>
<i>irudi-tzen za(i)-o</i>	<i>ema-ten d-i-zki-o-te</i>
<i>irudi-tzen za(i)-gu</i>	<i>ema-ten d-i-zki-gu-te</i>
<i>irudi-tzen za(i)-zu</i>	<i>ema-ten d-i-zki-zu-te</i>
<i>irudi-tzen za(i)-zue</i>	<i>ema-ten d-i-zki-zue-te</i>
<i>irudi-tzen za(i)-e</i>	<i>ema-ten d-i-zki-e-te</i>

Again, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> person morphs are of pronominal origin. Note that the 1<sup>st</sup> sg. mark is the same as the one of the NORK in pres. tenses. Unlike NOR and NORK 3<sup>rd</sup> person marks, though, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person marks for the NORI are both overt: sg. *-o* and pl. *-e*<sup>9</sup>.

## 2. THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF NUMBER MARKS IN BASQUE

Let us look at the historical attestations of all these number marking morphs, and at their interdialectal comparison, in order to see how much we can learn about their historical development<sup>10</sup>.

### 2.1. Number marking morphs on nouns

2.1.1. *The emergence of the article in some grammatical cases (abs., erg., gen., dat. and inst.) as the origin of the singular.* As we can see in 1.1., the abs., the erg., the gen. (and the ones derived from it), the dat. and the inst. cases

<sup>9</sup> In fact, the Basque verbal system is still more complex. When the intimate treatment is used, if none of the arguments involved in the verb is a 2<sup>nd</sup> person, then a 2<sup>nd</sup> person mark has to be present on the verb in any case. That is, the hearer of the speech act has to be represented somehow on the verb. These are the so-called ‘allocutive forms’ (Trask 1997: 107-109, Hualde 2003b: 192-195). This happens in every conjugation and in every tense/mood combination, but only in main clauses. In some cases, the marks differ depending on the gender of the hearer. Thus (allocutive marks in bold): *bera etorri da* ‘s/he has come’, but *bera etorri du-k* ‘s/he has come (you, intim. masc., being the hearer)’; *eman diot* ‘I have given him/her’, but *eman zi-o-na-t* ‘I have given him/her (you, intim. fem., being the hearer)’. In some Eastern dialects, allocutive forms exist also with non-intimate treatment. For theoretical considerations about them, see also Trask (1997: 234-236). In any case, allocutive forms do not add any new element to the question concerning number.

<sup>10</sup> For the historical analysis that follows, I use the following abbreviations. By and large, the dialects in Hegoalde (Southern part of the Basque Country, in Spanish territory) are, from West to East: Biscayan (= B), Gipuzkoan (= G), High Navarrese (= HN) and Roncalese (= R). In Iparralde (Northern part, in French territory), also from West to East: Lapurdian (= L), Low Navarrese (= LN) and Souletin (= S). Some other abbreviations used are: South. = Southern, a dialect from Araba (another province in Spanish territory), disappeared several centuries ago but still in use in the North of the province in the 16<sup>th</sup> century; Etx. = Etxepare, a Low Navarrese poet of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, author of a col-

have a sg. formation that is clearly the agglutination of the article *-a(r)-* plus the corresponding case mark. This has made scholars think that the *-a(r)-* must derive from the root of the demonstrative of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade present in *har-k* ‘that there (erg.)’ or *har-i* ‘to that there (dat.)’, *-k* and *-i* being case marks (Trask 1997: 199, Azkarate & Altuna 2001: 40 ff.). The transformation of a demonstrative into an article has multiple parallels, the one of the Romance languages being just the nearest to Basque. The origin of *gizon-a* ‘the man’, must be sought, then, in a deictic cliticized to the root: *\*gizon-har* ‘the man there’. As the use of this juncture grew in frequency, it took on a more neutral meaning and eventually the suffix became what in traditional linguistics we call an article.

The demonstrative origin of the article, then, is formally and semantically indisputable. A more controversial question is to what extent the process has taken place under pressure from the Romance model. The problem has been amply discussed in some recent works, like Haase (1992) and Heine & Kuteva (2005). Both are critically discussed in Manterola (2008b). I cannot get into this question in depth, but I must point out the clear fact that, regardless of its relation to the parallel process in the neighbouring languages, the Basque article *har* has taken on more functions than its equivalent in the Romance languages. In particular, it has acquired as secondary meaning that of indicating singularity. In the Romance languages, where the number category is fully grammaticalized, this secondary meaning is redundant, for the sg./pl. opposition is already expressed by the noun declension (*casa* ‘house’ / *casa-s* ‘houses’). In Basque, however, it seems to have played a crucial role. In fact, if we assume that the old language had no grammaticalized number, one can easily understand why the article has extended to many cases where it is not used in the Romance languages. These include direct objects (as in (9)) or in predicative constructions (as in (10)) *neska ederr-a da* ‘The girl is beautiful’, which would translate in Spanish as:

- (9) *Liburu ederr-a eros-i du-t*  
 book fantastic-artic. buy-PF. PRES-erg.1sg.  
 ‘I have bought a fantastic book’ (Sp. *He comprado un libro fantástico*)
- (10) *Neska ederr-a da*  
 girl beautiful-atic. ‘is’  
 ‘The girl is beautiful’ (Sp. *La muchacha es hermosa*, not *\*\*La muchacha es la hermosa*)

lection of poems in that dialect published in 1545; Leiz. = Leizarraga, a Low Navarrese priest of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and translator of the New Testament; Ax. = Axular, a 17<sup>th</sup> century Lapurdian priest who wrote the ascetic work *Gero* in 1643; Pouv. = Pouvreau, a 17<sup>th</sup> century Lapurdian priest, author of a Basque-French dictionary; Oih. = Oihenart, a Souletin poet and researcher of the same century; Laz. = Pérez de Lazarraga, a 16<sup>th</sup> century writer of Araba who in 1567 wrote a bucolic novel and several poems, in his archaizing dialect, which have been recently discovered and published in 2004; RS. = *Refranes y Sentencias*, a collection of proverbs and sayings which was published in 1596 and reflects an archaic variety of B; Mik. = Mikoleta, a Biscayan grammarian who wrote a grammar of his dialect in 1653; Kap. = Kapanaga, a Biscayan parish priest who wrote a Christian doctrine in 1656. Besides, Aquit. = Aquitanian, the language of the Aquitanian inscriptions, which were written around the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD in a language undoubtedly related to Basque and contain person- and god-names; CSM = Cartulary of the Monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla in La Rioja (South of Araba), containing a document called Reja de San Millán (1025), with plenty of archaic onomastic material.



This was already shown brilliantly by Irigoien (1987 [1985]: 42) over twenty years ago, who, in referring to cases like the ones just mentioned, states: “El artículo vasco no es en ese contexto otra cosa, históricamente hablando, que el sustitutivo del número gramatical, del que carece la lengua”<sup>11</sup>. I shall go into this more deeply in 2.1.2.

Consequently, the Basque article contains a wider semantic scope than its Romance equivalent. Once this situation consolidated, the language had two different grammaticalized numbers in the noun morphology (apart from the plural, whose grammaticalization will be discussed in 2.1.4.): abs. sg. *gizon-a*, close to the meaning ‘the man’, definite and specified for number (as singular); and abs. indef. *gizon*, indefinite and (usually) unspecified for number. This means that *gizon* can sometimes be semantically singular, sometimes semantically plural, depending, for instance, on the quantifier with which it is combined (i.e., *zenbait* ‘some’ will provide *gizon* with a pl. meaning: *zenbait gizon* ‘some men’), or simply on the context (i.e., combined with *edozein* ‘any’, we get *edozein gizon-i*, which can mean ‘to any man’ or ‘to any men’ alike). Since *gizon* is morphologically the non-marked form and hence the continuation of the unmodified root, and *gizon-a* is the marked form, it is reasonable to suggest that the *gizon* prior to the split between abs. sg. *gizon-a* / abs. indef. *gizon* contained the semantic functions of mod. *gizon* plus the ones taken over by the modern *gizon-a*. In other words, it was unspecified for definition as well as for number, the specification for these categories being added by demonstratives –some of them with tendency to cliticize– or quantifiers<sup>12</sup>. In Spanish and English, for instance, the root form of a noun is associated with the singular number, because the opposite number, the plural, is morphologically marked (*coche* ‘car’ / *coche-s* ‘car-r’). But in some languages the root noun is not closer to the idea of singularity than to the idea of plurality, and this was the case, I believe, in old Basque (see 3.1.)<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Irigoien’s views in this article are so clear-sighted and well expressed, that two further quotations are fully justified. The first one (1987 [1985]: 41): “Los [artículos] carentes de grado, es decir, *-a* / *-ak*, además de su función de artículo determinado, según la terminología tradicional, sirven en muchos casos simplemente para señalar la singularidad o la pluralidad en la medida en la que, al carecer de número la lengua, han servido como soporte de desarrollos paralelos de éstos según modelos románicos, y este hecho ha ido paulatinamente incrementándose a través de la historia, a veces acompañado de la aparición de nuevas concordancias, por lo que el uso vasco del artículo no siempre coincide con el de las lenguas románicas”. And on the following page: “Digamos que el estado actual de cosas tiene su origen en el entrecruzamiento en cierta medida del sistema propio de la lengua vasca con las tendencias al desarrollo del número por influencia exterior, incompatibles en principio con dicho sistema”. See also Iturrioz (1985).

<sup>12</sup> The specification for number obviously varies depending on the semantic nature of the noun. The article cannot bestow a singulative meaning upon an uncountable noun, for instance: *ur-a* ‘the water’.

<sup>13</sup> In Medieval documents, there are remains of another article, *-o*, probably being in complementary distribution with the article *-a*, *-o* implying proximity and being the singular counterpart of *-ok* (Azkarate & Altuna 2001: 40–42). Compare the following sequences of name + nickname in a Navarrese document of the 14<sup>th</sup> century: *Lope Hederro* / *Garcia Hederra*. The meaning of the first would be something like ‘Lope, you that handsome’ (Basq. *eder* ‘handsome, beautiful’), whereas the second implies just a mention in 3<sup>rd</sup> person. The origin of *-o* seems to be also a demonstrative, in this case the one of 1<sup>st</sup> grade *hau(r)* ‘this here’. Moreover, both this demonstrative, in its unreduced form, and the one of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, *hori* ‘that’, have left historical traces of a relation with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns, as well as with nouns which is somewhat closer than that of demonstratives proper (Azkarate & Altuna 2001: 33 ff.). For instance, in Etx. (LN, 1545), we find *ni-haur* ‘me myself’, *hi-haur-c* ‘you yourself (erg.)’, *gu-haur-c* ‘we ourselves (erg.)’, *çu-haur* ‘you yourselves’. In Etxeberri Ziburukoa (L, 1697): *zer-ori - zu zer-oni* ‘you yourself’, *zer-on-ek - zer-orr-ek* ‘you yourself (erg.)’. Forms like these have sur-

2.1.2. *The struggle between the sg. and the indef. forms in historical attestations.* It is clearly attested that the sg. and the indef. morphs have struggled to represent the semantically non-marked form of any noun or NP, that is, the one appearing for instance in lexicons and word listing contexts. In the Aquitanian votive and funeral inscriptions containing Basque anthroponyms –some of which are clearly common nouns–, we do not find any trace at all of the article, but purely bare nouns and NPs:

- (11) *CISSON* ‘man’ (= mod. *gizon*)  
*NESKATO* ‘little girl’ (= mod. *neska-to*)  
*VMMESA HAR* ‘old child’ (= mod. *ume zahar*)  
*HARBELEX* ‘black stone (probably ‘slate’)’ (= *harr(i) beltz*).  
 [Gorrochategui (1984); in English, Gorrochategui (1995) and Trask (1997: 398-403)]

The grammaticalization of the sg. article does not appear fully accomplished in Medieval documents either<sup>14</sup>. A very meaningful testimony from the point of view of our research is the French pilgrim Aimery Picaud’s Basque word list of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. This word list contains several words in Basque gathered from a Basque speaking local of that century –probably a Navarrese one–, and the corresponding translation into Latin. Some of the words included in the list are:

- (12)a. *ogui* (mod. *ogi* ‘bread’)                      b. *echea* (mod. *etxe-a* ‘the house’)  
*ardum* (mod. *ardo* ‘wine’)                      *iaona* (mod. *jaun-a* ‘the lord’)  
*aragui* (mod. *haragi* ‘meat’)                      *andrea* (mod. *andre-a* ‘the lady’)  
*gari* (mod. *gari* ‘wheat’)  
*araign* (mod. *arrain* ‘fish’)  
 [Mitxelena (1990 [1964]: 49-51); in English, Trask (1997: 44-45)]

Interestingly, even if all nouns appear in a word listing context, the countable nouns have an article (12b), whereas the uncountable ones do not (12a). This occurs nearly without exception<sup>15</sup>. This supports my previous reasoning that countable concepts are more prone to be associated with a singular representation of them. This is why the abstract mention of a gen-

vived until the present in Eastern varieties. As for nouns, in Leizarraga (LN, 1571) we find: *niri bekhatore-oni* ‘to me, this sinner’, *bi ... guci-ori* ‘the whole of you (sg.)’, *ene ohe churi-orrec* ‘this white bed of mine here (erg.)’. Many constructions like these, with a demonstrative not just cliticized but suffixed to the root, survive in modern dialects in idiomatic and vocative expressions: *neska ederr-ori!* ‘you pretty girl!’ (Azkarate & Altuna 2001: 34-37). What I mean by this is that the grammaticalization of the demonstrative *\*har* into the article *-a* has been only the most successful process among several different cliticizing strategies that the language has explored.

<sup>14</sup> Manterola (2006, 2007a) has recently suggested that the Basque article, in a phonetically very archaic form, appears already in the *CSM* and some other documents of the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries of the Monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla (in La Rioja) containing Basque place names. According to him (2007a), in forms such as *Artazaha*, *Otazaha*, *Udalba*, *Elorzahea* (the three of them in 1025), *monte Massoa* (945), *Massoara* (991), *Elhorzaha* (1129) and some others, the article is present, in most cases under the form *ha*. That is, the aspiration of *har* is still preserved, but the word-final weak rhotic has dropped out. If this is so, these would be the oldest attestations of the article. I think that this is highly promising in future research. Even though, in this synthesis of the problem I prefer to focus on later documents where a comparison between forms with and without article presents fewer philological problems.

<sup>15</sup> *Araign* (mod. *arrain* ‘fish’), with no article, is easily interpretable as uncountable. He also gives *uric* (mod. *ur* ‘water’ + partit. suffix *-ik*).



eral concept like ‘house’ made the Basque local think of one house, the singular idea being represented by the definite –originally deictic– article *-a*, whereas the abstract mention of a general concept like ‘wheat’ generated an uncountable representation of it, expressed by the morpheme  $-\emptyset$ , indefinite and unspecified for number.

The testimony of this list contrasts with similar lists made by other authors in the 16<sup>th</sup> century where the article *-a* is always added, to countable and uncountable concepts alike. Thus, in Lucio Marineo Siculo’s word list (beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century) we find:

- (13) *exhéa* (mod. *etxe-a* ‘the house’)  
*odéya* (mod. *hodei-a* ‘the cloud’)  
*súa* (mod. *su-a* ‘the fire’)  
*cerúa* (mod. *zeru-a* ‘the sky’)

[Mitzelena (1990 [1964]: 146-147); in English, Trask (1997: 46)]

The same happens in Landuchio’s much longer word list, actually a small *Dictionarium Linguae Cantabrigiae* dating from the same century. Here we find *usaya dacarr* for ‘stinking’ (lit. ‘(s/he) brings stink’, where *usai* ‘stink’) and *lurruña dacar*<sup>16</sup> for ‘to inhale’ (lit. ‘(s/he) brings steam’, where *lurrun* ‘steam’).

Because of the reasons mentioned in 2.1.1., in historical phases (from the 16<sup>th</sup> century on) the article has expanded in different directions, such as subjects, direct or indirect objects, predicative phrases, and existential sentences (of the type “there are people in the house”). This process did not take place straight away, nor did it happen without leaving plenty of traces until recently, and even in fossilized expressions still alive today in every dialect. The expanding process has gone much further in the West<sup>17</sup>. In RS (B, 1596)<sup>18</sup>, predicative adjectives are almost always indef. (see 14a), but direct objects usually have article (see 14b and c). There are exceptions, though (see 14d and 14e):

- (14)a. *Berarr-a luzé da eta sendo* (RS, 268)  
 grass-artic. long ‘is’ and strong  
 ‘Grass is long and strong’
- b. *Guzti-oenzat dakar ogi-a* (RS, 318)  
 all-DAT.PL.INCL. ‘(s/he) brings’ bread-artic.  
 ‘(He) brings bread for all of us’
- c. *Aunz-ak gari-a ecus-i* (RS, 359)  
 goat-erg.sg. wheat-artic. see-PF.  
 ‘The goat sees the wheat’

<sup>16</sup> Let this be compared to the place name *Euri-dacar*, attested in 1540.

<sup>17</sup> As Mitxelena (1987 [1978]: 367) observes, the 17<sup>th</sup> century Biscayan grammarian Mikoleta considers that every noun of his language ends in *-a*, whereas a Souletin of the same century, Oihenart, opposed this view.

<sup>18</sup> I base on my own analysis, not exhaustive, of the facts as they appear in RS.

- d. *Andi-a da ene min-a* (RS, 114)  
big-artic. 'is' my grief-artic.  
'Big is my grief'
- e. *E-gu-zu ogi eta su* (RS, 304)  
give-dat.1pl.-erg.2pl. bread and fire  
'Give us bread and fire'

If we turn to the East, we can see that in Ax. predicative adjectives are usually in the indef. form (15a), but predicates of 'name + adj.' structure are more prone to take the article (15b):

- (15)a. *Hain nagui eta alfer ba-gara* (Ax., 1)  
so indolent and lazy if-'(we) are'  
'If we are so indolent and lazy'
- b. *Ihiztari handi-ac dira begui-ac* (Ax. 392)  
hunter great-artic.pl. '(they) are' eye-artic.pl.  
'Great hunters are the eyes'

[Azkarate & Altuna (2001: 74-75), taken from Mitxelena (1987 [1978]: 370 ff.)]

As for direct objects, the needs of the metrics seem to be what determines the presence or absence of the article in the following hemistichs by Etx. (I, 15-16)<sup>19</sup>:

- (16)a. ... *goalardon-a frangoki* (7 syllables)  
award-artic. abundantly  
'(It will have) award abundantly'
- b. ... *punizione-Ø segurki* (7 syllables)  
punishment-abs.sg for sure  
'(It will have) punishment for sure'<sup>20</sup>

Let us briefly see what happens with some cases other than the abs. The following example is by Leiz. (Joh. 9, 32):

- (17) *ecen nehorc irequi du-ela itsu sorthu-ren begui-ric*  
COMPL. anybody open-PF vb.aux.-COMPL. blind born-GEN.INDE. eye-PARTIT.  
'That nobody has opened any eye of any blind from birth'

[Mitzelena (1987 [1978]: 369), recalled by Azkarate & Altuna (2001: 70)]

Here, the gen. appears with no determiner, even if in contemporary dialects the only case that can appear without any determiner is usually the partitive. The reason for this is that it implies an indefinite semantics inside a phrase which is the direct object (in partitive) of a transitive verb in a negative sentence. In today's Basque, one would say *itsu sortu baten ere*, or *ezein itsu sorturen*, or *inongo itsu sorturen*, to express the same phrase.

<sup>19</sup> This is again based on my own observation.

<sup>20</sup> I can not further extend on this point. For a deeper analysis about the facts in Eastern dialects, see Álvarez (1977) and Manterola (2007b).

Similar archaicizing cases like *itsu sorturen* can be presented for other cases like the ergative and the dative, mostly in negative contexts, but sometimes in affirmative ones too, like in Leiz. (Joh. 6, 18):

- (18) *Itsasso-a haice handi-c erauntsi-z altcha-tzen cen*  
 Sea-artic. wind big-ERG.INDEF. hitting-INST.INDEF. raise-IPF. vb.aux.  
 ‘The sea was raised by the hitting of a big wind’  
 [Mitxelena (1987 [1978]: 369), recalled in Azkarate & Altuna (2001: 71)]

The phrase appears in erg. indef. because it does not refer to a particular big wind that we know. This example looks particularly archaic, because it shows the indefinite form without any determiner in a context in which some kind of indefinite determiner is spreading already in the author’s time. It is highly probable (see 3.1.) that phrases like *haice handi-c* were more frequent in the centuries prior to the 16<sup>th</sup>, and that they comprised more contexts than in historical periods. Mitxelena (1987 [1978]: 370) and Azkarate & Altuna (2001: 71-72) stress that cases like these two are more frequent in Leiz. (1571) than in Ax. (1643), and that this epitomizes the chronological tendency<sup>21</sup>.

2.1.3. *The singular number in the rest of the cases (allat., ablat., ines. and loc.-gen.).* As we saw in 1.1., the rest of the cases form the plural by adding the case suffix directly to the root, with no *-a(r)-* morph in the middle: *etxe-ra* ‘to the house’, *etxe-tik* ‘from the house’, *etxe-ko* ‘of the house’ (not *\*\*etxe-a-ra...*)<sup>22</sup>. These are all local cases from a semantic point of view. Note that these forms have the same grammatical value as the ones with *-a(r)-*, like *etxe-ar-en* ‘of the house’. That is, they are sg. (not indef.), and hence definite, even if they have never had any *-a(r)-*. This is precisely the crux of the matter: why have these cases acquired the grammatical status of what in historical Basque we call abs. sg. without incorporating the *-a(r)-*, as done by the other cases?

I think that this issue must be related to the fact that at least some of these cases seem somewhat spurious. Their origins are heterogeneous, and if we study the historical development of each one, the general impression is that their rise shows dialectal variations and is relatively recent, and that several elements of different origin have combined to form new cases of the same morphological status as the ones that were already integrated in the system<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> Mitxelena’s study (1987 [1978]) of these facts is more exhaustive, although he leaves the facts in the West out of consideration. See in any case RS (335) (again, my own observation): *·-k bat uste* ‘a peach-coloured horse thinks one’; RS (302): *azaga onik estau mandazai-k* ‘no mulateer has good twilight’; and RS (470): *iretzat naztoana beste-ri ez opaetsi* ‘what you do not want for yourself, do not wish for anybody else’. Both *laru-k*, *mandazai-k* and *beste-ri* have indef. suffixes. Indeed, with some few words like *beste* the use of the indef. is widely accepted in today’s spoken language: *Pellok eta beste-k esandakoa* ‘what Pello and some other(s) have said / may have said’. One could adduce *errege* ‘king’ and certain kinship terms too, for these are traditionally declined with the indef. suffix even when definite: *errege-k esan du* ‘the king has said’, *aiton-ek esan du* ‘Granfather has said’. But I agree with Trask (1997: 199-200) that they are most probably not remnants of the period when there was no number opposition, but nouns treated as proper nouns, in which the marking is always indef.

<sup>22</sup> There is S. *etxe-a-la* ‘to the house’, with embedded article, but this does not invalidate the view that the allative is, just as the rest of the local cases, not extremely old.

<sup>23</sup> For example, the abl. sg. suffix proper is not *-tik* in the oldest texts (Trask 1997: 204-205, Azkarate & Altuna 2001: 125-135), but *-rean* or *-(r)ik* (like the partit., see 1.1.) in Old B, *-(r)ik* (pl. *-etarik*) in the East. The later successful *-tik* comes probably from the agglutination of the elements *-ti* and *-ka*, a juncture which in any case shows up from the earliest texts (Etx. *zeru-tika* ‘from heaven’.

This means that the entrance of at least some of these elements into the case system may have been probably recent. This might have something to do with the fact that they are not singularized by *-a(r)-*. But, this being so, we find the paradox that although their formation seems to be more recent, they preserve a more archaic situation. As Trask (1997: 202) points out: “This suggests that the local cases to some extent preserve the state of affairs just referred to<sup>24</sup>: the addition of case-suffixes to NPs with no determiner”.

At any rate, all this cannot be dissociated from the semantic observation that none of the local cases can be attached to animate nouns nor to personal pronouns (unlike the ones with *-a(r)-*, which can be attached both to animates and unanimates; see 1.1.). From a morphological point of view, we should note that all these cases share another interesting characteristic: they all form the plural by means of the suffix *-eta(-)*, in contrast to the cases with *-a(r)-*, which form the plural with a suffix analyzed by Mitxelena as *\*-ag(-)*<sup>25</sup> (see 2.1.4.). Let us look at the peculiarities of these morphs.

2.1.4. *The plural marking morphs.* The origin of the suffix *-ak* (and the cases other than the abs. corresponding to it) is problematic. There are basically two theories: one represented by Irigoien (1981), and the other by Gavel (1920) and Mitxelena (1987 [1971]).

According to Irigoien (1981), the plural building process runs parallel to the singular. Thus, at some point the language had two series of demonstratives corresponding to two grades of proximity. In the plural, the basis of them would be the demonstratives *\*haug-* and *\*heg-*. In the course of time these would get closer to the stem and became plural articles: > *-ok* and *-ek*, respectively. This explanation proves valid for the erg. pl. of every noun and also for abs. pl. and erg. pl. of personal pronouns and demonstratives (*zu-ek* ‘you (pl.) (abs. and erg.)’, *hai-ek* ‘those there (abs. and erg.)’...). However, it has some problems to explain the abs. pl. suffix of nouns, namely *-ak*, at least in a straightforward way. The opposition of abs. pl. *-ak* to its corresponding erg. pl. *-ek* in dialects other than B and G is precisely the point on which Mitxelena (1987 [1971]) focuses his analysis. According to him, the pan-dialectal abs. pl. suffix *-ak* may come from a suffix *-aga*, which appears

The first of these elements, *-ti*, appears in Old B with a meaning close to ‘through’ (RS. *ao-ti* ‘through the mouth’). In some old Eastern texts, it has a meaning which *-ti* –with no suffixed *-k(a)*– has preserved in contemporary dialects: that of a derivational suffix which creates adjectives from nouns, mostly with some pejorative meaning, like *beldur* ‘fear’ > *beldur-ti* ‘fear-ful’, *lotsa* ‘embarrassment’ > *lotsa-ti* ‘bashful’. In Oih., we still find some instances of *-ti* which are on the verge of becoming ablative, like *azi-ti bibia* ‘from the seed to the grain’ (proverb 44), where a translation like ‘seed-like does the grain grow’ would be possible as well. A similar line of argument would be valid for the allat. sg. suffix (Trask 1997: 205-206, Azkarate & Altuna 2001: 122-125). What this implies is that we can see, in the development of forms attested in historical times, how some elements that belonged originally to the derivational morphology (*beldur* > *beldur-ti*) have been integrated into the grammatical morphology (*etxe* > *etxe-tik*).

<sup>24</sup> What he has just referred to is some lines further up on the same page and is also worth-mentioning: “In all likelihood, the case-endings were originally suffixed directly to NPs unmarked for number, just as happens today with proper names, except when a demonstrative was present with its number-marking”.

<sup>25</sup> This is precisely the reason why I have included the ines. here. As in the abs., erg., gen., dat. and the instr. singular cases, the ines. sg. case *-an* can be at least synchronically (that is, independently of its origin, which might be *\*-gan* according to a proposal by De Rijk (1981); but see Manterola (2008a) for an alternative view) interpreted as a thematic *-a-* + *-n* (compare ines. pl. *-eta-n*). But the fact that it forms the plural with *-eta-* associates it to the cases without *-a(r)-*.

in place and family names (place names: *Astigarr-aga*, *Galarr-aga*; family names: *Iturri-aga*, *Arri-aga*...) and expresses some kind of plurality, with apocope of the last *-a*. The erg. pl. form would start off from *\*-ag-ek*, which should be analyzed as the juncture of the plural mark (*-ag-*) plus the ergative mark (*-k*), *-e-* being an epenthetic vowel. Thus, whereas the *\*-ag(a)* would develop into *-ak* as a mark of the abs. pl. in all dialects, erg. pl. *\*-ag-e-k* most probably evolved to *\*-aek* and from here to *-ak* in the Western dialects (B and G, where it merged with the abs. pl. form) and to *-ek* in the Eastern dialects<sup>26</sup>.

At this point, I prefer to postpone a deeper discussion about the origin of the plural until 3.1., for the kind of arguments that are necessary to express an opinion have more to do with internal reconstruction than with historical facts, which is our subject of discussion for the moment. Nonetheless, a conclusion that can be drawn with no need to speculate beyond the historical facts is that the grammaticalization of the plural article, whichever its origin may be, took place later than that of the singular. In particular, in B if we add the sg. article *-a* to a root ending in *-a*, a dissimilation takes place, whereby /*domeka-* / + *-a* / > *domekea* 'the Sunday'. But this development does not occur when we add the pl. article: /*domeka-* + *-ak* / > *domekak* 'the Sundays', not *\*\*domekeak*, as we would expect if the development were the same as in the former. The explanation for this seems to be (see Mitxelena 1987 [1981]: 48-49) that in /*domeka-* + *-a* / a dissimilation *-aa-* > *-ea-* took place inside the word, whereas the grammaticalization of /*domeka-* + *-ak* / occurred at a later period, when the dissimilating rule was no longer effective<sup>27</sup>.

As stated in 1.1. and 2.1.3., locative cases make the plural by means of the suffix *-eta* (*etxe-eta-n* 'in the houses'). It is apparently a common view (see Trask 1995, Urgell 2006) that this declensional *-eta* is the origin of the derivational suffix *-eta*, with its variant *-keta*, which appears in all dialects with a variety of functions such as abundance or *nomina actionis*: *ogi-keta* 'abundance of bread', *ardi-keta* 'flock of sheep', *lapurr-eta* 'theft', *bil-keta* 'gathering', West. *egur-eta* / East. *egur-keta* 'wood piling', etc. (see more cases in Azkue 1969 [1923-25]: 113-116). The *-(k)eta* expressing *nomina actionis*, in the locative form *-(k)etan*, has formed a gerund, which can combine with finite forms and is quite productive in old Western texts (Laz. *kanta-etan ebel-la* 'as he sang'). This implies a semantic deviation of the type collective/abundantial meaning > abstract/*nomen actionis*, typologically anything but rare.

Schuchardt (1968 [1923]: 8-9) proposed that the origin of this morpheme was Lat. *-ēt-a*, plural of *-ēt-um*, a derivational suffix with collective meaning and very frequent to indicate, for instance, groups of trees (*fagētum* > Sp. *ha-*

<sup>26</sup> The same phonetic evolution and dialectal distribution can be observed in relative verbal forms. For instance, *\*da-en* 'which is' > *dan* in the East, but *den* in the West.

<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, in the West the sg./pl. opposition of the noun morphology is indicated by another procedure. The sg. forms are accentually unmarked, whereas the pl. forms are accentually marked on the syllable immediately before the pl. suffix: *gizon-a* 'the man (abs.)', *gizon-ak* 'the man (erg.)' / *gizón-ak* 'the men (abs.)', *gizón-ak* 'the men (erg.)'. This accent pattern seems to be reconstructable for the same dialects that melt the erg. sg., the abs. pl. and the erg. pl. into the same form, > *-ak*; roughly, for B and G. But, since the morphology of the dialects further to the East –where the opposition erg. sg. / erg. pl. is morphologically overt– seems to be older, I shall consider the accent opposition of the West a secondary phenomenon in diachronic terms, which came about maybe as a reinforcing means to mark number.



*yedo* ‘beech grove’, but also *arboleda* ‘grove’, < Lat. *-ēta*). It also abounds in Spanish place and family names (*Fresnedo*, *Fresneda*, built upon *fresno* ‘ash tree’; *Pinedo*, *Pineda*, built upon *pino* ‘pine tree’...). The suffix *-eta* is also frequent in Basque place and family names, and, as expected, it maintains the voiceless stops between vowels (*Arri-eta*, *Iturri-eta*, *Mendi-eta*, from *harri* ‘stone’, *iturri* ‘fountain’, *mendi* ‘mountain’, etc).

The traditional view, among Bascologists working under the mitxelenian paradigm, is that this formal coherence between the Basque and the Romance facts supports Schuchardt’s theory. But Manterola (2008a) has posed some serious objections to it. Among them: 1) morphological items are not usually borrowed; 2) it is not self-evident why the borrowing language should borrow the plural of a collective suffix from the source language in order to form a declensional plural, instead of borrowing the singular form, which expresses a plural idea in itself; 3) it is not clear why *-eta*-bearing NPs in the declension are definite; 4) in documents of the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries of the Monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla (La Rioja), place names with *-eta*-present aspiration before the suffix (*Sansoheta* (1025), *Erroheta* (1025), *Sagarzaheta* (1089), and others), which is difficult to understand if it came from Lat. *-ēt-a*; 5) Schuchardt’s theory also fails to explain the fact that *-eta* has a variant, *-keta*, which appears nearly exclusively after sibilants (*Amez-keta*). Instead, Manterola proposes that *-eta* is nothing else than the morphologization of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade demonstrative of local cases, which is still *heta-n* (ines.), *heta-ko* (loc.-gen.), *heta-ra* (allat.)..., in the Eastern dialects. Among other things, this can give an explanation to the definiteness of plural cases with *-eta*-, to the presence of aspiration in the San Millán documents, and to the variants with *-keta*. These would be remnants of the state of affairs prior to the change *k- > h-*, which seems not to have happened after sibilant<sup>28</sup>.

We have, then, two possible scenarios: 1) *-aga* and *-eta* are in origin derivational suffixes (*-aga* autochthonous, *-eta* probably borrowed) which have in course of time morphologized and become flecational<sup>29</sup>; or 2) the whole

<sup>28</sup> In fact, Manterola (2008a) derives also the plural of some non-local cases from demonstratives. As Irigoien (1981), he leaves the abs. and dat. out of his discussion, since the vowels of these are at first sight more problematic (i.e., *gizon hek* > *gizon-ak* (abs. pl.)??. but see 3.1. in my paper), and focuses on the erg. and the gen. He derives: *gizon hék* > (East.) *gizon-ék* (erg. pl.) and *gizon hén* > *gizon-én*. This explanation also accounts for the accentuation attested in S, though in a different way from Micheleña’s analysis. They would not be ancient paroxytone (hence regular) forms that have become oxytone (hence irregular) through contraction, but /noun + demonstrative/ junctures with accentual unity. Since demonstratives bear the accent on the root (*hék* ‘those (abs. erg.)’, *hé-tako* ‘of those’...), the accentuation of S. *gizon-ék* and *gizon-én* is exceptional but not unexpected. Here too, Manterola considers that his explanation can account for an old aspiration such as *Arbel-goi-hen* (CSM, 1025), that is ‘slate-upper part-superlat. suffix’. That the superlative suffix is a specialization of the gen. pl. is widely accepted (Trask 1997: 210), but he matches it to the gen. pl. of the demonstrative, that is *hen* ‘of those’. In addition, according to him, this *hen* appears under the form *ken* in *az-ken* ‘last’, where *atz(e)* ‘back’ and *ken* ‘of those’, that is *az-ken* ‘the backest, the last’. See 3.1. for further discussion.

<sup>29</sup> Be their origin as it may, what is clear anyway is that in their toponymic historical attestations the suffixes *-aga* and *-eta* share very important structural characteristics. Mitxelena (1987 [1971]: 141-146) noticed some of these: 1) unlike other suffixes present in place and family names, they never suffer the effects of the compositional morpho-phonological rules (*harri-* + *-be* > *Arbe(a)* ‘under the stone’, + *-dui* > *Ardui* ‘abundant in stones’; but + *-aga* > *Arriaga*, + *-eta* > *Arrieta*; never *\*\*Arraga*, *\*\*Arreta* or the like); 2) *-aga-* and *-eta-* are incompatible between them, that is, they are in complementary distribution, so that forms like *-etaga* and *-ageta* are extremely rare; 3) nonetheless, they often combine with other suffixes, but in these cases *-aga* and *-eta* are always at the end of the word (*buztin-* ‘clay’ + *-(t)z(a)-* ‘abundant’ + *-aga* > *Buztin-tz-aga*, *urreiz-* ‘hazel’ + *-ti-* ‘abundant’ + *-eta* > *Urreiz-ti-eta*); 4)

plural flection comes from the morphologization of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade demonstratives. I shall come back to this in 3.1., but for the moment I would like to remark that, even if the grammaticalizing process can vary significantly depending on which option is the correct one, the starting point must have been the same: the absence of grammaticalized number in the noun morphology. In the first scenario, the two suffixes may have overlapped together in order to fill the gaps of a plural paradigm of recent formation<sup>30</sup>. In the second scenario, the fact that the rise of a grammatical plural has developed only by means of the morphologization of a demonstrative would also point to an absence of grammatical number on the noun itself.

As for the pl. article of proximity, as Azkarate & Altuna (2001: 42) state, all authors agree that it must come from the demonstrative of 1<sup>st</sup> grade (*hau(e)k*), this form being the plural counterpart of the Medieval article *-o-*.

2.1.5. *Some other derivational suffixes with plural-abundantial meaning.* Apart from the devices just mentioned, in Basque place and family names some (other) derivational suffixes with plural/abundantial meaning are also attested<sup>31</sup>. Thus, the suffix *-tza* creates toponyms and surnames like *Arta-tza* (*arto-* ‘maize’), *Elor-tza* (*elorri-* ‘hawthorn’) and *Iturri-tza* (*iturri-* ‘fountain’), scattered over the whole territory. Eastern dialects have the variant *-tze* (S. *intzár-tze* ‘walnut tree’) or *-(t)z* (*Larra-tz*, < *larre-* ‘meadow’), which may be an apocopated variant. Additionally, in the CSM (1025) this suffix appears to present the form *-za(h)a*, like in *Artazaha*, *Hillarrazaha* and some others. Manterola (2006: 674) has pointed out that these data may be analysed as the agglutination of *-za* plus *-ha*, the latter being the article *har*. We do not find this too surprising, for in cases like *Buztin-tz-aga*, the suffixes *-za* and *-ti* admit further suffixing with *-aga* and *-eta*, provided that these occupy the final position (see Mitxelena 1987 [1971]: 141-146). As in *Buztin-tz-aga*, in *Arta-za-ha* too the morph which ends becoming declensional is at the end of the word.

The suffix *-(t)za* with abundantial meaning is also still productive in the modern language: *jende-tza* ‘plenty of people’, *diru-tza* ‘plenty of money’. In addition, *-(t)za* can also imply abstract concepts, concepts in general, or action: *bizi-tza* ‘life’, *morroi-tza* ‘servitude’, *egoitza* ‘residence’. In fact, in the form *-tze* it has become a gerund (*har-tzen dut* ‘I take’), which has been gaining terrain to the older morph *-te* over the centuries (see Trask 1995, Urgell 2006). As with *-(k)eta*, here too we see a semantic deviation collective/abundantial > abstract/*nomen actionis*.

Another plural/abundantial suffix is *-doil-duil-di*, frequent in toponyms especially with names of plants. The variant *-di* is present in central regions (*Arantzadi* ‘plenty of thorns’, *Elordi* ‘plenty of thorns’, *Eltzaur-di-a* ‘plenty

when combined with syntagmatic structures of the type ‘noun + adjective’, the resulting order is always ‘noun + adjective + suffix’ (*harri-* + *-leun-* ‘smooth’ *-aga* > *Arrileunaga*, *arte-* ‘holm oak’ + *-eder-* + *-eta* > *Artederreta*).

<sup>30</sup> In the case of the *-eta*, if it really came from Latin, the fact that it was derivational in the loaning language and has grammaticalized in the borrowing one, may be an indication that, in the latter, there was in ancient periods no clear division line between derivational and declensional suffixing procedures.

<sup>31</sup> I base here on Mitxelena (1997 [1953]) and (1977 [1961]).



of nuts'). In devoicing contexts, there is a variant with voiceless stop (*Saga-s-ti* 'apple orchard' < *sagar-* + *-z-* + *ti*). In peripheral regions, the variants with diphthong are more typical. In the East, *-doi* is the most frequent (*Ariz-toy-a* 'oak orchard', place name in Navarre attested in 1042); in the West, the variant *-dui* is most typical, as in the place name *Ilar-duy-a*, in Araba. The suffix has virtually disappeared from the spoken language (Azkue 1969 [1923-25]: 81), but its frequency in place names proves that it was productive at some point. The geographical distribution and the phonetic logic lead one to think that the original form must have been *-doi*<sup>32</sup>.

A third plural/abundant suffix is *-zu*, also present in place names of the whole territory and again very related to the vegetable kingdom: *Amezu-a* (*ametz-* 'gall oak'), *Arta-zu* (*arto-* 'mais'), *Ota-zu* (*ote-* 'gorse'), *Urki-zu* (*urki-* 'birch'). When suffixed to roots ending in apico-alveolar sibilant, this timbre has prevailed (*sarats-* 'willow' + *-zu* > *Sarasu-a*). Actually, from clusters like this a suffix *-tsu*, with the meaning 'ful', has spread over the lexicon and is productive in modern spoken dialects (*arazo-* 'problem' + *-tsu* > *arazotsu* 'problematic'). The original *-zu*, still a competing variant (*zorri-zu* 'lousy'), is now on the decline, but it was suffixed to *bat* 'one' and to several interrogative/relative pronouns as a pluralizer: *bat-zu* 'some, several' (whence *batzu-ek*, *batzu-en...*), *nor-tzu* 'who (pl.)' (whence *nor-tzu-en* 'of whom (pl.)'...), *zein-tzu* 'which (pl.)' (whence *zein-tzu-en* 'of which (pl.)'...), the last two only in the West.

It seems clear, then, that the old language had a rich repertoire of derivational suffixes with plural/abundant meaning. It is quite logical to wonder whether this profusion of derivational procedures might be caused by a possible lack of declension. Another obvious fact is that most of these suffixes can cluster together, as in the agglutinations of *-z-* + *-ti-* that we have come across. These can also combine with *-aga-* or *-eta-*, provided that these are at the end of the word. As already pointed out, this seems to imply that they had a tendency to desemantize easily and to make up the semantic gap later through further recharacterization.

#### 2.1.6. *Observations about the morphology of indef. forms and proper names.*

Once the plural was formed, a remarkable situation came about. For roots ending in consonant, the morphological forms for the indef. and the pl. fell together in cases other than the abs. and the dat. (erg. indef./pl. *zuhaitz-ek* '(the) trees', gen. indef./pl. *zuhaitz-en*, loc.-gen. indef./pl. *zuhaitz-etako*; but abs. indef. *zuhaitz* / abs. pl. *zuhaitz-ak*). On the contrary, for roots ending in vowel we find for instance erg. indef. *mendi-k* / erg. pl. *mendi-ek* 'the mountains', gen. indef. *mendi-ren* / gen. pl. *mendi-en*, loc.-gen. indef. *mendi-tako* / loc.-gen. pl. *mendi-etako*. In order to explain the opposition *mendi-tako* / *mendi-etako*, Trask (1997: 204) suggests that the *-e-* may have been reinterpreted as a mark for the plural, being consequently removed from the indef. form. Azkarate & Altuna (2001: 117) point out that the analogy with the

<sup>32</sup> As for its etymology, Mitxelena (1977 [1961]: 257-258) relates *-doi* to *lohi* 'mud, sludge', at an older period 'body', taking into account the change *\*d- > l-*, which does not occur in internal position. Recent investigations based on the study of the root (Lakarra 1995, 2006) suggest that the oldest form may be *\*don-i*. The original meaning is controversial.

non-local cases may have been another factor for this analogy: erg. pl. *mendi-ek*, gen. pl. *mendi-en*, dat. pl. *mendi-ei*, where we find an *-e-* on every form<sup>33</sup>.

I think that in order to understand these processes one has to bear in mind the pressure that the abs. exerted over the whole noun paradigm, once this began to take form. Here, the tripartite number opposition sg. / indef. / pl. was always overt: *zuhaitz-a* / *zuhaitz* / *zuhaitz-ak*, *mendi-a* / *mendi* / *mendi-ak*. For the indef. number to survive in the noun morphology, it was necessary to maintain the morphological marking on as many forms as possible. This was impossible on roots ending in consonant, because an epenthetic *-e-* was inserted in order to avoid forms like *\*\*zuhaitz-tako*. But it was possible on vowel-ending roots. However, this is only a synchronic observation which does not necessarily correspond to the historical order of facts. In other words, indef. *etxe-ta-n* 'in houses' might not have been created from *etxe-e-ta-n* once this arose, by dropping the *-e-*. An *etxe-ta-n*, with *-ta-* as a local mark or the like, may have existed before the grammaticalization of the plural *etxe-etan*<sup>34</sup>. Since the noun declension of Basque has, by and large, the same morphological shape at the beginning of the written tradition as it has today (the syntactic uses of each form and of each number left aside), we simply cannot know.

As for non-local cases, it is conceivable that the opposite may have occurred in the gen. and the dat., as already proposed by Gavel (1929: 51). According to this Bascologist, in forms like *etxe-aren*, the *-a-* may have been interpreted as the sg. marker (as it is in the abs. sg. form *etxe-a*), and consequently been dropped, but leaving the *-r-* untouched (hence, > gen. indef. *etxe-ren*)<sup>35</sup>. A morphological distinction from the plural on consonant-ending stems was again impossible here, since forms like *\*\*zuhaitz-ren* would have arisen. An alternative hypothesis is that the *-r-* is purely epenthetic (*etxe- + -en* > *etxe-r-en*), and that in these cases we have, in all dialects, what seems to have happened in the Basque variety spoken in the Zaraitzu valley (in the Northeastern part of Navarre, linguistically south of the BN. dialect) in the abs. sg. of the *a*-ending roots (*alaba- + -a* > Zar. *alabara* 'the daughter').

Apparently, then, the Basque noun declension has developed respecting as much as possible the functional field of the indef. number. This has maintained a clearly delimited set of functions, even after the grammaticalization of the sg. and pl. morphs. Indef. forms are the formal continuation of the

<sup>33</sup> In any case, Trask's idea was not new. Castañós Garay (1979) already proposed that the *-e-* was reinterpreted as a mark of the plural. But he went a step further and proposed that this *-e-* was abstracted from nouns and formed the demonstrative of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade *hek*, still present in Eastern dialects. This *hek* was cliticized to nouns and formed the plural (as in Irigoien's theory).

<sup>34</sup> In this case, *etxe-ta-n* would be an indef. form, perhaps older than its definite sg. counterpart (*etxe-a-n*), which in any case does not appear to take any *-ta-*. It is worth remembering that among the meanings of the morph *-ta-* is the "natural generalization of a concept" (Azkue 1969 [1923-25]: 305; translation mine). Today, this meaning appears especially with animates (*erbi-tara noa* "I am going to hunt hares"), and this seems to be recent, but perhaps the function of the pure conceptual mention is archaic. I shall discuss the morph *-ta-* in some more detail in 3.1.

<sup>35</sup> In other words, the indef. forms of vowel-ending stems would have come about as a result of an analogy, whereby abs. sg. *etxe-a* : abs. indef. *etxe* :: gen. sg. *etxe-aren* : gen. indef. X, where X = *etxe-ren*. See De Rijk (1998 [1972]: 27-28) for a thorough disussion.

bare stem (*gizon*), the only paradigmatic form that existed before the emergence of the number category (> *gizon-a*, *gizon-ak*). They have inherited, from that stage, the ambiguity as for the sg./pl. distinction, but the definite meanings have been subtracted from them and taken over by the sg. and pl. forms.

Proper names also reflect, to some degree, the archaic morphology of the situation prior to the number distinction (see 1.1.). The morphology of non-local cases is the same as the indef. of common nouns, which is not surprising: proper names are logically not expected to take the *-a(r)-* typical of the sg. forms, since they are definite by themselves. But in local cases, we find something different from what happens in the indef. of common nouns. They are not derived from the pl. by dropping the *-e-* from consonant-ending stems (pl. *etxe-etatik* > indef. *etxe-tatik*), but are formed as the sg. forms of common nouns, that is, by suffixing the pure casual form (*Elorrio* → *Elorrio-tik*). It is worth noting that, in the ines. of proper names, only *-n* is suffixed in the standard language and most historical dialects (compare *Elorrio-n*, but *etxe-an*, not *etxe-n*)<sup>36</sup>.

2.1.7. *A final remark.* I think that the evidence for the lack of number opposition in the noun morphology of Basque at a not very remote past period is incontestable. Let us present just an additional element (probably some more might be set forth in a more exhaustive work), which does not belong to any of the standard parameters of the noun morphology, but supports the view just mentioned. Irigoien (1987 [1985]: 41) says that, in Basque, a series of elements used for the determination of the noun phrase exist, which lack grammatical number but refer semantically to a collective idea. This is the case i.e. of *oro* ‘all’, unspecified (like Eng. *every*) for gender and number. Today, it survives only in the East, but it left traces also in Old B, as in the following example:

- (19) *Oro-c do-gu ardura bat, ta guzti-a taco-ençat* (RS, 533)  
 all-ERG.IDF. vb.aux.-erg.1pl. care one and all-ABS.SG. ‘for’-BENEPL.  
 ‘All of us have a care and everything for the ‘for’”

In an Eastern author of the 16<sup>th</sup> century text, we find the same state of affairs in this respect:

- (20) *Heuscaldun den giçon oro-c alcha beça buru-ya* (Etx., XVI, 10)  
 basque ‘which is’ man every-ERG.IDF. raise vb.aux. head-artic.  
 ‘Let every man that is Basque raise his head’

<sup>36</sup> Had we no other data, the synchronic interpretation of it on proper names would be just *-n* anyway. But in peripheral dialects we happen to find cases where, in the declension of common nouns, the ines. can be formed with and without article, making oppositions of the type *etxe-n* ‘at home’ / *etxe-a-n* ‘in the house’. De Rijk (1998 [1981]: 218) lists several of these, like the one in the Souletine author Tartas (S, 1666), *soiñ-e-n* (*soin* ‘body’) / *soiñ-ian* (< *soin(-e)-a-n*), as well as S. *etxe-n* / *etxin* (< *etxian* < *etxe-a-n*), taken from the grammar of modern S by Larrasquet (1939). Irigoien (1985 [1978a]: 751) puts forward some others from the West, actually from the Arratia valley, in Southern Biscay: *beàrr-e-n* ‘at work’, *itáurre-n* (< *\*idi-aurre-n*) ‘in front of the oxen’, *atxúrr-e-n* ‘(working) on the hoe’. All of them are tinged with some adverbial, fossilized character, and are most probably archaic.

The elimination of the sg./pl. opposition has made *oro* disappear in many regions, except in fossilized expressions like *egun-e-ro* ‘every day’. Even where it survives, it usually appears after the nominal phrase with pl. article determination, as in *gizonak oro* ‘all the men (abs.)’. To make up for this loss, the root *guz(t)i-a* / *guz(t)i-ak* ‘all, every’ extended its scope, and another form with the same meaning was created, *den-a* / *den-ak*, which is the result of the lexicalization of a relative sentence (*den-* ‘what is’). Unlike *oro*, both can receive definite suffixing, specified for number<sup>37</sup>.

## 2.2. Number marking morphs on demonstratives

From the point of view of number marking, there are several things that deserve some comment. Demonstratives are in themselves definite. This has two consequences: 1) they have obviously no indef. number, only sg. and pl.; and 2) the morphs that, in the noun morphology, make nouns definite in the sg. (*gizon* > *gizon-ar-i* ‘to the man’), would be redundant on demonstratives. An implication of the second consequence is that, on demonstratives, these morphs are not added. Instead, in non-local cases it is the sheer casual mark that is suffixed: *hon-en* ‘of this’, *hon-i* ‘to this’, etc. In regards to local cases, in no dialect of any period do forms like *\*\*hon-eko* ‘of this’, *\*\*hon-era* ‘to this’ or *\*\*hon-etik* ‘from this’ appear, as would be expected if the endings were taken from the sg. of nouns. The forms found always have the morph *-(e)ta*. Let us look at some Eastern ones<sup>38</sup>:

Table 10. Local cases of demonstratives in several Eastern authors

EtX. (LN, 1565)	Leiz. (LN, 1571)	Ax. (L, 1643)	Oih. (S, 1657)
<i>hon-eta-n</i>	<i>hun-eta-ko</i>	<i>hun-eta-n</i>	<i>hun-eta-n</i>
<i>har-ta-n</i>	<i>hun-eta-n</i>	<i>hun-eta-ra</i>	(- <i>hon-ta-n</i> )
	<i>har-ta-co</i>	<i>horr-eta-n</i>	<i>hun-ta-ric</i>
	<i>har-ta-ra</i>	<i>horr-eta-ra</i>	<i>hor-tan</i>
	<i>har-ta-ric</i>	<i>horr-eta-ric</i>	<i>har-ta-n</i>
		<i>har-ta-n</i>	

[Azkarate & Altuna (2001: 13-16), taken from Irigoien (1987 [1978b]) and Irigoien (1981)]

According to Trask (1997: 206-207): “The new morph *-ta* [...] has crept into some local and/or instrumental case-forms of demonstratives and pronouns: *honetan* ‘in this (one)’, *zertaz* ‘about what?’, *zertan* ‘in what?’, *nitaz* ‘about me’, and so on. I see no reason to regard these as other than late developments”. One might wonder why a morph associated in origin to plural

<sup>37</sup> In fact, as Irigoien points out on the same page, some dialects that maintain *oro* use it as a normal root, with definite suffixes (*gizon oroei* ‘to all the men’, instead of the archaic *gizon orori* ‘to every man’). This is also part of the coupling process which the language has had to undergo in passing from a number-insensitive system to a number-sensitive one. I think that *oro* might come from a reduplication of the 1<sup>st</sup> grade demonstrative, that is, from *\*haur-haur-*, > *\*hor-hor-* > *oro(r)-*. The final *-r* would have been preserved in forms like *oror-en* and *oror-i*. Another example of demonstrative agglutination might be present in *hura* (the abs. sg. form of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade demonstrative that was created –except in B– to compensate for the specialization of *\*har* as article), if it comes from *\*haur-har*.

<sup>38</sup> The last morpheme is the case mark and the first the demonstrative root. Those with *-n* as third segment (i.e. *hon-eta-n*) are 1<sup>st</sup> grade, those with *-o-* vowel and *-r-* as third segment (i.e. *horr-eta-n*) are 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, and those with *-a-* vowel (i.e. *har-ta-n*) are 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

forms has extended specifically to the sg. forms of the local cases of demonstratives but not, for instance, to the sg. of the normal noun declension. We can either assume that *-ta-* is a morph associated to local cases, originally not specific of plural forms (see in 2.1.6. what has been said about *etxe-ta-n*), or postulate with Trask an extension of *-(e)ta-* from the plural to the singular of demonstratives. Perhaps in this extending process the indef. of nouns has functioned as a morphological bridge: as the case endings for the local cases were formally the same on nouns in the indef. number –at least the ones ended in consonant– and on pronouns (*zuhaitz-i* ‘to trees’, *zuhaitz-en* ‘of trees’ / *hon-i* ‘to this’, *hon-en* ‘of this’), a certain morphological association between both came about and the parallel extended to non-local cases: *zuhaitz-etako* ‘of trees’, *zuhaitz-etara* ‘to trees’, etc. → *hon-etako* ‘of this’, *hon-etara* ‘to this’, etc.

As we turn to the abs. and erg. forms, the most striking thing is that the abs. pl. of demonstratives is typically *-ek*, unlike the abs. pl. of the normal noun declension, which is always *-ak*. This remains an unsolved problem (see 3.1. and 3.2.). Some of the forms that are present in the East are the following:

Table 11. Abs. and erg. pl. cases of demonstratives in several Eastern authors

Etx. (LN, 1565)	Leiz. (LN, 1571)	Ax. (L, 1643)	Oih. (S, 1657)
<i>ho-c</i> (abs., erg.)	<i>hau-c</i> (abs., erg.)	<i>hau-c</i> (abs., erg.)	<i>hau-c</i> (abs.)
<i>hoy-ec</i> (abs., erg.)	<i>hori-ac</i> (abs.)	<i>hori-ec</i> (abs., erg.)	<i>au-ec</i> (erg.)
<i>he-c</i> (abs., erg.)	<i>hori-ec</i> (erg.)	<i>he-c</i> (abs., erg.)	<i>hori-c</i> (abs.)
<i>hay-ec</i> (abs., erg.)	<i>he-c</i> (abs., erg.)		<i>hori-ec</i> (erg.)
<i>hey-ec</i> (abs.)			<i>he-c</i> (abs.)
			<i>hei-ec</i> (erg.)

[Azkarate & Altuna (2001: 13-16), taken from Irigoien (1987 [1978b]) and Irigoien (1981)]

The traditional view is that the alternations *hau-k* / *hau-ek* have arisen through syncope, with eventual specializations of each form as in Oih. Azkarate & Altuna (2001: 18) derive East. *hek* ‘those there (abs.erg.)’ from < *haiek* < *haek*, but Irigoien (1981) and Manterola (2008a) consider more plausible that *hek* is the basic form, and that *haiek* has come about by pluralizing sg. *har-* ‘that there’ with *hek*: *har-* + *-(h)ek* > *haek* > *ha(i)ek* (abs.erg.). This is congruent with the fact that *-ek* also pluralizes the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade demonstratives in the same manner: *hau-* + *-ek* > *hauek* ‘these (abs.erg.)’, *hori-* + *-ek* > ‘those (abs.erg.)’.

Unlike the forms of dialects further to the East, the B. sg. demonstratives are built on the same root as the oblique cases of the sg.: *ón-eek* ‘these (abs.erg.)’, *órr-eek* ‘those (abs.erg.)’, *ár-eek/láek* ‘those there (abs.erg.)’. This and the use of the root accent to mark the pl. occur throughout the whole pl. paradigm: *ón-en* ‘of these’, *ón-ai* ‘to these’, *ón-tako* ‘of these’, etc. (vs. *hau-en*, *hau-ei*, *hau-etako*, etc., further to the East).

### 2.3. Number marking morphs on interrogative/relative and indefinite pronouns

Interrogative and indefinite pronouns maintain, in some aspects, an archaicizing morphology. Since they are by themselves indefinite, they have tended not to undergo the innovations brought about by the suffixation of the determining elements with secondary (redundant) number specification.



Even though, in some cases they have also developed some number marking strategies, which in any case differ from the ones of nouns. B has developed *zein-tzuk* ‘which ones’ (see 1.3.)<sup>39</sup>, where the suffix is the one seen in 2.1.5. –which must have jumped from nouns to indef. interr./relat. pronouns– plus a *-k* of plural. This form is used both for abs. and erg. In 18<sup>th</sup> century (Biscayan) writings, *zein-tzu-ek* also appears, and in even more recent times, *zein-tzu*. In *zein-tzu-ek*, the second pluralizing suffix must have come from demonstratives (*hori* ‘that’ / *hori-ek* ‘those’)<sup>40</sup>.

A similar reasoning holds true for pluralizing forms of *nor* ‘who’ and *zer* ‘what’. Forms like *nor-tzu*, *nor-tzu-k*, *nor-tzu-ek*, and *zer-tzu*, *zer-tzu-k*, *zer-tzu-ek*, are attested at different stages of the B. tradition. This might make us think that the suffix *-zu* has been used with a pluralizing function in grammatical sectors other than nouns in B alone, but pluralizations of *bat* ‘one’ with *-zu* show up in the whole Basque territory, including the East<sup>41</sup>. In Leiz., we find abs. *bat-zu* / erg. *bat-zu-k*, whereas in Ax. and other authors of the 17<sup>th</sup> century writing in L we find abs. *bat-zu-k* / erg. *bat-zu-ek*. In the West, there is no abs./erg. formal distinction from the beginning of the tradition, *bat-zu-ek* being the predominant form in G, *bat-zu-k* in B. In other cases, there is historical hesitation as for lining up *bat-zu(-e)(-k)* with the indef. (ines. *bat-zu-tan*) or with the pl. (ines. *bat-zu-etan*).

A last point that deserves some comment is the verbal agreement that indef. nouns and phrases have had. As we have seen in 1.3., the modern tendency is for the verbal agreement to take the value *ad sensum*, that is, to be plural if the corresponding argument is semantically plural (*zenbait gizon etorri dira* ‘some men have come’). However, cases where indef. phrases display sg. agreement on the verb, even when they are semantically plural, also appear (*gizon asko etorri da* ‘plenty of men have come’), and are actually the more frequent: 1) the further to the East we go; 2) the older the text that we study is. See for instance (Azkarate & Altuna 2001: 48-49):

(21)a. *anhiz guizon ari ba-da andre-z gayzqui erray-ten* (Etx., III, 3)  
 many man CONT. COND.-‘is’ woman-INST-PL. badly say-IPF.  
 ‘If plenty of men are speaking badly about the women’

b. *Ediren-en d(-Ø)-u-zu laur kapitulu* (Tart., foreword)  
 find-FUT. vb.aux.-abs.erg.2sg. four chapter  
 ‘You will find four chapters’

[Azkarate & Altuna (2001: 48-49)]

<sup>39</sup> I have taken the dialectal information of this point (2.3.) from the *OEH* (see Euskaltzaindia 1987-2005).

<sup>40</sup> But even in B, a semantically pl. *zein-* shows up with no pluralizing suffix. Let us look at the following sentence of a B. epic poem of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (see Mitxelena 1990 [1964]: 83): ... *onegaz vr-ten dau-de beralan, oñeztar barruangoac, çein erre ez cite-ç-an* ‘... the Oñacins [one of the factions in the civil conflicts occurred in Biscay, Guipuzcoa and Araba in the 15<sup>th</sup> century] who had not burned themselves came out of inside immediately’. As Irigoien notes (1987 [1985]: 42), *çein* refers semantically to more than one (which is marked on the finite verb *cite-ç-an*), but is morphologically unspecified as for the number category, except for the fact that the corresponding verbal agreement is pl. In modern B, one would say *zein-tzuk*. Once again, historical data are easily comprehensible if we assume that the old language had no grammaticalized number category, and number marking has spread over different areas of the morphology by means of extension, analogy and agreement processes.

<sup>41</sup> For the history of *bat* and *batzu* as indefinite articles in the history of Basque, see Manterola (2008b).

Note that the respective finite verbs with abs. pl. morphemes in (21a) and (21b) would be *(ba-)dira* and *d-it-u-zu*. In Ax., though, both sg. and pl. agreements are possible with *asko* ‘much, many’. It seems clear that the verbal agreement for indef. phrases was originally sg., and that the pl. agreement has spread as the number category consolidated across the morphology, presumably under the influence of the surrounding Romance languages.

#### 2.4. Number marking morphs on personal pronouns

If we now turn to personal pronouns, we can observe that they have not changed much historically as far as the category of number is concerned. An important point, though, is the conversion of *zu*, ‘you (pl.)’ in some of the earliest texts, into the respectful form for ‘you (sg.)’ in today’s dialects (see 1.4.), following a process common to many European languages, whereby a 2<sup>nd</sup> pl. personal pronoun has become a form of 2<sup>nd</sup> sg. implying some kind of respect (Azkue 1969 [1923-25]: 431 ff., Trask 1997: 196). In Spanish and Basque, this has pushed the old 2<sup>nd</sup> sg. form partially or totally aside (*vos* ‘you (pl.)’ in Old Spanish, or *usted* < *vuestra merced* ‘your (pl.) mercy’, both undergoing the change 2<sup>nd</sup> pl. > 2<sup>nd</sup> sg.; as has *zu*, ‘you (pl.)’ in Old Basque), and a new 2<sup>nd</sup> pl. form has been created by means of the addition of a pluralizing morpheme (*vos-otros* in Spanish, *zu-ek* in Basque).

Synchronically, the plural origin of the 2<sup>nd</sup> sg. morph *-zu* is indicated by the fact that, in the NOR verbal agreements, we always find, along with the mark corresponding to the 2<sup>nd</sup> sg. pronoun, the plural mark: *za-bil-tza* ‘you walk’ (compare *da-bil* ‘s/he walks’, but *da-bil-tza* ‘they walk’)<sup>42</sup>. This must be a remnant of the old state of affairs. But additionally, both the pronoun *zu* and its verbal agreement marks (*-zu(-)*, *za-*, *zen-...*) are attested with plural meaning in some old texts, especially in Old B. For instance:

- (22) *za-go-ke-z*      *exilik*    *ta*    *enzun*      *ez-tai-zu*                      *gexto-rik*      (RS, 18)  
 abs.2pl.-be-FUT. quiet    and    hear-PF.      not-vb.aux.-erg.2pl.    bad-ADV.  
 ‘You (pl.) will be quiet and will not hear badly’

The transition is in general well attested and quite clear, so I shall skip the details here (they are explained in Lakarra 1996: 173-176).

#### 2.5. Verbal forms

The verbal finite forms of Basque still represent an unsolved problem, in which several categories (among others tense, aspect, transitivity, person and number) intermingle. Yet, since in the present article we are involved only with the category of number, several firm conclusions can be reached on this point<sup>43</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> The new (secondarily created) 2<sup>nd</sup> pl. pronoun not only has this old mark on the verbal agreement marks, but also another recharacterizing pl. morph, taken from the various forms originated in the NORK (see 2.5.2.), which differentiates it from the form transformed into sg.: *za-bil-tza* ‘you (sg.) walk’ / *za-bil-tza-te* ‘you (pl.) walk’, *du-zu* ‘you (sg.) have’ / *du-zu-e* ‘you (pl.) have’.

<sup>43</sup> For the problem in general, see Trask (1997: 223 ff.), Gómez & Sainz (1995), Azkarate & Altuna (2001: 198 ff.).



For number-marking morphemes, the historical development of verbal forms does not show drastic changes. The system described in 1 appears with few variations from the beginning of the written tradition. As we saw there, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person marks on verbs are of clitic origin, and the number distinctions on clitics are lexical.

2.5.1. *Plural markers on NOR morphemes.* NOR pl. marks have additional plural-marking morphemes (*ga-bil-tza* ‘we walk’), but this mark is redundant, for the opposition is already marked by the prefixes (*na-bil* ‘I walk’ / *ga-bil-tza*). As Gómez & Sainz (1995: 257) and Trask (1977: 206) have suggested or explicitly pointed out, the plural mark is most likely the result of an analogical extension from the 3<sup>rd</sup> pl. This implies that the old distinction should be *na-bil* / *\*ga-bil*, *ha-bil* / *\*za-bil*, and so on in other tenses and moods. Thus, the number distinction would have been originally pronominal, hence lexical.

On the contrary, the pl. mark is crucial to distinguish the 3<sup>rd</sup> person clitics. In fact, the 3<sup>rd</sup> p. sg. morpheme for NOR and NORK is  $-\emptyset$ , and the corresponding 3<sup>rd</sup> p. pl. morpheme is an overt mark that surfaces variously as  $-z(-)$ ,  $-zki(-)$ ,  $-tza$ ,  $-tzi$ ,  $-de$ ,  $-it$  and  $-d-l-t$  in the NOR, and as  $-e$ ,  $-de$  or  $-te$  in the NORK. The infix  $-zki(-)$  appears in central dialects<sup>44</sup> to mark that the NOR is plural mostly in the NOR-NORI and NOR-NORI-NORK conjugations (although in G it has also had some success on synthetic verbs: G. *dakar-zki* ‘s/he brings (several things)’). It is clearly of secondary origin (Gómez & Sainz 1995: 257, Trask 1997: 222), in so far as it has to be analyzed as the original pluralizer  $-z-$  plus the dative marker  $-ki(-)$ , reinterpreted as part of the pluralizer<sup>45</sup>.  $-tza(-)$  and  $-tzi(-)$ , which usually appear on synthetic verbs of NOR and NOR-NORK conjugations (East. *dakar-tza* ‘s/he brings (several things)’, L. *doa-tzi* ‘they go’), seem to be some kind of extended forms of  $-z(-)$ , or this some shorter or syncopated variant of  $-tza(-)$ .  $-de$  appears, among intransitive synthetic verbs, only in the verb *egon* ‘to be’ (*da-go* ‘s/he is’ - *dau-de* < *\*da-go-de* ‘they are’), and even this form has the expected pluralizer  $-z$  in B: *da-go-z*.

This points towards a situation in which  $-(t)z(a)$  pluralized absolutives markers and  $-el-del-te$  ergative markers<sup>46</sup>. The presence of  $-de$  in *dau-de* is due to an analogical extension which has succeeded only in that verb and even

<sup>44</sup> It is, then, in geographical competition with  $-z-$ , typical of peripheral dialects like B and S. In contemporary G, a point of the isogloss  $-z-$  /  $-zki-$  seems to be between Azpeitia –a small town more or less in the middle of Guipuzcoa– and Errezil, a little village some few kilometres to the East. According to Yrizar (1991: 311, 546), an auxiliary form like *zai-zki-gu* vb.root-abs.3<sup>rd</sup>sg.-dat.1<sup>st</sup>pl. is *zai-z-ku* in Azpeitia but *zai-zki-gu* in Errezil. In the Eastern part of the Basque Country, for the same form we find *ze-z-kü* in Pagolle (variety of S, see Yrizar 2002: 177), but *zauzkiu* (< *zau-zki-gu*) as well as *zau-z-ku* in the Eastern subvariety of the variety of Cize-Garazi (BN; Yrizar 1999: 149) some kilometres to the south-east.

<sup>45</sup> Compare *dago-ki-o* ‘s/he, it corresponds to him/her/it’ / *dago-z-ki-o* ‘they correspond to him/her/it’. The pl. mark is just  $-z-$ , but from cases like these,  $-ki-$  (originally a dat. agreement marker) was interpreted as part of the pluralizer and extended to other cases with no  $-ki-$  as dat. marker: *zai-o* ‘s/he, it is to him/her/it’ / *zai-zki-o* ‘they are to him/her/it’.

<sup>46</sup> In different parts of B, G and South. there are examples, old and modern, of a lack of number agreement between a pl. subject and its corresponding NOR morpheme in the NOR-NORI conjugation, as well as between a pl. direct object and its corresponding NOR morpheme in transitive conjugations, whether NOR-NORK or NOR-NORI-NORK. Thus, in the recently discovered text containing a novel and poems by Lazarraga (South., 1567), the presence of the NOR pl. morpheme in transitive conjugations is somewhat lax, as cases like *begi-ak negarretan eukala* ‘(he) had his eyes in tears’ and *berba oek egin eutsan* ‘(he) made (= said) these words to him’ show, respectively, where there is no NOR pl. mark. This can hardly be anything but an innovation (see Lakarra 1996: 188-190).

there not in all dialects. The exceptions are the abs. pluralizer *-it-*, the abs. pluralizing opposition *-d/-t-* of past forms and the irregular opposition in the verb *izan* between *da* 's/he is' / *dira*. The second one (*ikus-i nin-du-e-n* 's/he saw me' / *ikus-i gin-tu-e-n* 's/he saw us') is but a secondary development of the first one through syncope (compare L. *ikus-i gin-it-u-e-n*). However, the origin of the other two is quite mysterious, and their origin will not be discussed here<sup>47</sup>. What is out of discussion is that *-it-* is the common form of the old language to mark plurality of the NOR in the NOR-NORK conjugation, for it appears in the oldest texts of every dialect.

We can go on to wonder what the origin of *-(t)za(-)* may be. Lakarra (2006: 605) has recently suggested that it can be the same *-(t)za(-)* that we find in the noun morphology (*belar-tza* 'plenty of grass', see 2.1.5.). This hypothesis is quite promising, since apart from the semantic proximity between both, the formal behaviour is the same: we see *-z-* and *-za-* as variants of the same morpheme both in the noun and in the verb morphology<sup>48</sup>.

2.5.2. *Plural markers on NORK morphemes.* Like NOR morphemes, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person NORK morphemes are prefixed at the beginning of the word in past tenses (*ne-karr-en* 'I brought', *zen-e-karr-en* 'you (sg.) brought'). Unlike NOR morphemes, they are suffixed at the end of the word in present tenses (*dakar-gu* 'we bring'). Therefore, here too these morphs are of pronominal origin and number marking is lexical. The exceptions are the 1<sup>st</sup> p. sg. and 2<sup>nd</sup> p. sg. marks of present tenses, in which the marks are completely different from the corresponding pronouns from a formal point of view (*dakar-t* 'I bring', < \**-da*; *dakar-k/-n* 'you (masc./fem., intim.) bring', < \**-ga/\*-na*). On the other hand, it is worth remembering that, in the realm of the 2<sup>nd</sup> p. –and this is valid also for 2.5.1.–, the verbal marks have undergone the same development as the pronouns. Thus, *-zu* must have been originally a 2<sup>nd</sup> pl. marker, and as such appears in Old B. texts<sup>49</sup>, as in:

- (23) *say-ra*                                      *n-o-çu*                                      (RS, 361)  
       vulture trap-allat.sg.    abs.1sg.-vb.root.-erg.2pl.  
       'On the vulture trap you (pl.) have me'

Later, it became a 2<sup>nd</sup> sg. of respect, and a new plural was created by suffixing *-e* (*ikus-i nau-zue* 'you have seen me').

<sup>47</sup> See, however, Trask (1997: 222-223) on the morph *-it-*: "Conceivably, we might be looking at fossilized traces of a very ancient state of affairs in which Basque verbs showed stem suppletion for singular and plural absolutive NPs, a system which is by no means rare in the languages of the world, but the evidence available is hardly sufficient to support such an interpretation – though note the enigmatic of behaviour *etzan* 'lie down': *datza* 'he/she lies down', *dautza* 'they lie down'".

<sup>48</sup> Lakarra's hypothesis is actually more tricky. He attempts to prove that there has been a holistic change whereby, to put forth but one parameter, the language has passed from a predominantly prefixing phase to a predominantly suffixing phase. According to this, some prefixes would have jumped from the beginning to the end of the word under certain conditions. He relates the nominal suffix *-tza*, for instance, to the first syllable of certain disyllabic autochthonous roots like *zahar* 'old', *zabal* 'wide', *zabar* 'careless', *zakar* 'rubbish, layer', *zakil* 'penis', *zapal* 'squashed, crushed' and some others. This syllable has never been an independent morpheme in historical periods, and these nouns have most probably undergone a great deal of desemantization, but Lakarra suggests that in several of them a meaning related to size, quantity, or intensity is latent.

<sup>49</sup> In fact, this plural meaning of *zu* seems to have survived longer on verbal marks than on pronouns. Thus, Azkue (1969 [1923-25]: 433-434) states that in several towns inside the B. area, like Eibar and Bakio, the plural sense of *zu* is maintained on verb forms but not on pronouns.

Let us turn to 3<sup>rd</sup> person NORK morphemes. Trask (1995, 1997: 221) has proposed the reasonable view that the original form of the morph *-tel-del-e* was *-de*. This would devoice in devoicing contexts like *\*dakar-z-de*, > *dakar-z-te* ‘(they) bring (several things/persons)’, *-te* being later generalized even to non-devoicing contexts in non-peripheral dialects (Cent. *du-te* ‘(they) have’). After a vowel, *-de* would drop the stop, *-e* being generalized in B and S (B. *\*dau-e* > *dabe*, S. *di-e* ‘they have’) but also having some success further to the east (G. *du-e* ‘they have’<sup>50</sup>, HN. *du-zu-e* ‘you (pl.) have’). This approach explains most data quite satisfactorily, and most exceptions are easily explained by means of secondary processes. The original form of the morpheme, *-de*, has survived as well, though less systematically. Apart from the *dau-de* ‘they are’ discussed in 2.5.1., which appears everywhere except B, *-de* is attached to the intransitive *izan*, especially in the eastern half of the Basque Country, as in LN. *zira-de* ‘you (sg.) are’, *gira-de* ‘we are’ and *dira-de* ‘they are’<sup>51</sup>. This means that, even if *-de* must have started off as the original 3<sup>rd</sup> p. pl. marker of NORK marks, the allomorph preserving the original form has nearly disappeared from transitive conjugations. Exceptional are a number of (mostly) Old B. forms, where *-de* pluralizes a transitive verb of the NOR-NORK conjugation, as in:

- (24) *Aberass-oc*                      *jay-a*                      *dau-de*                      (RS, 3)  
       rich-inclus.artic.              holiday-artic.              vb.aux.-erg.3pl.  
       ‘The rich have holiday’

The corresponding form in today’s B is *dabe* (< *\*dau-e*), which setimes appears in the same texts as *daude* (see Lakarra 1996: 166). The same holds true for Old B. *eu-de-n*, whose corresponding contemporary B. form is *eben* (< *\*edu-e-n*).

As for the origin of this morpheme, I agree with Azkarate & Altuna (2001: 216) that the old theories by Gavel and Lacombe, which link the variants *-e* to the pluralizing *-e* arisen in the declension (that is, *\*mendi-e-ta-n* ‘on the mountains’), fail to explain the variants *-de* and *-te*. More recently, Lakarra (2006: 604) has suggested that it might be another suffix coming from a prefix (see 2.5.1.) that “migrated” from the beginning to the end of the word, so that *-de* might be related to some words beginning with *le*<sup>52</sup>. I shall go into this more deeply in 3.5.

2.5.3. *Plural markers on NORI morphemes.* The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> p. marks are, both in present and past tenses, formally like the NORK marks of present tenses. They are located after the verbal root (but before the NORK mark, if

<sup>50</sup> As I can see in Yrizar (1991: 25, 123), today *du-e* is the only form in Usurbil, but just a little bit further to the East, in Hernani, both *du-te* and *du-e* appear. In the East, we have *die* (< *du-e*) in Pagolle (S; Yrizar 2002: 178) but *du-te* some kilometres to the South-East, in the East of Cize-Garazi (LN; Yrizar 1990: 150).

<sup>51</sup> In this forms, *-de* is redundant most of the times, for the number distinction with the corresponding sg. form is overtly expressed by other means (*niz* ‘(I) am’ / *gira* - *gira-de* ‘(we) are’, *da* ‘(s/he) is’ / *dira* - *dira-de* ‘(they) are’, etc.).

<sup>52</sup> Not to the conditional prefix (*le-tor-ke* ‘s/he would come’, *le-kar-ke* ‘s/he would bring’), with which a semantic relation is not at hand (see 3.5.). Lakarra (2006: 604) suggests, instead, a comparison with the following first syllables of disyllabic autochthonous roots: *leher* ‘abundancy’, *lebor* ‘dry’, *legar* ‘gravel’, *legatz* ‘hake’ (*gatz* being ‘salt’, could it be ‘much salt’ or the like?).

there is one, in the NOR-NORI-NORK conjugation): *da-go-ki-t* ‘it corresponds to me’, *irudi-tzen za-i-gu* ‘it seems to us’; *eman di-zu-te* ‘they have given you (sg)’.

On the other hand, the same suffix *-tel/-del/-e* (< *-de*) commented on in 2.5.2. seems to be also the pluralizer of the dative mark of the 3<sup>rd</sup> p. sg., which usually appears as *-o* (*gustatzen zai-o* ‘s/he like him/her/it’, *ematen di-o* ‘s/he/it gives him/her/it’). In B, though, we find the variant *-a* (Kap. *jak-o* ‘s/he is to him/her/it’, but RS. *jaka-z* ‘they are to him/her/it’; ~ *zai-o* and *zai-zki-o* in today’s standard language). The traditional view (Azkarate & Altuna 2001: 208) is that both *-o* and *-a* derive from the two different demonstratives that I spoke of in 2.1.1.: *-o* < (*h*)*au(r)* and *-a* < (*h*)*a(r)*. However, Lakarra objects (see Gómez & Sainz 1995: 252) that West. *-a-* is just a morpho-phonological variant of *-o* in internal position (*emon deutz-o* ‘s/he has given him/her’ / *emon deutz-a-gu* ‘we have given him/her’)<sup>53</sup>. Be it as it may, I think that the demonstrative origin of this mark (whether from *haur* and *\*har* or from *haur* alone) is quite consistent (see 3.5.).

The corresponding plural mark has the central variant *-ote* (L. *eman di-ote* ‘s/he has given them’)<sup>54</sup>, which is clearly segmentable as *-o-te*, that is, *-o* pluralized by *-te*. The more spread variant *-e-* may also be reasonably analyzed as a contraction of *\*-o-e* or *\*-o-de*, which would be the same as *-o-te* but with the variant *-e* / *-de* instead of *-te* (Gómez & Sainz 1995: 251; already suggested in Schuchardt 1968 [1923])<sup>55</sup>. An alternative analysis, proposed –apparently only orally– by Trask to Gómez & Sainz (1995: 251), is that *-e-* derives from *\*-ai-*, which in its turn would come from the incorporation of the plural demonstrative *\*(h)ai* (*haiek* ‘those over there’). This hypothesis is not defended in Trask (1997: 219).

2.5.4. *Relative chronology.* Once I have briefly gone through these number marking morphs, the next question to be posed is when they were incorporated in the verbal complex. As Trask (1977: 205-206) and Gómez & Sainz (1995: 257) point out, there are clear traces that this incorporation is rather late, certainly later than the latest phase at which structural changes affected all dialects homogeneously. This is most evident on the absolutive morphs, for: 1) they have various forms across different verbs of the same dialect (i.e. G. *d-it-u* ‘s/he has them’, *dabil-tza* ‘they walk’, *dakar-zki* ‘s/he brings’) as well as across the same form in different dialects (West. Cent. *doa-z* ‘they go’, East. *doa-tzî*); 2) they appear in different positions inside the word, again both across different verbs of the same dialect (i.e. G. *d-it-u* ‘s/he

<sup>53</sup> This objection is based on Mitzelena (1988 [1954]: 793). The morpho-phonological alternation would be of the type *arto* ‘maize’ + *txiki* ‘small’ > *arta-txiki* ‘millet’, typical in Basque compounds (Trask 1997: 250-252). Gómez & Sainz (1995: 252) note, however, that in some 16<sup>th</sup> century texts *-o* and *-a* appear as free variants, with no such conditioning: Leiz. *darrayc-a* - *darreic-o* ‘s/he/it follows him/her/it’.

<sup>54</sup> It also appears in some varieties of HN. In the variety of Lizaso, subvariety of Imoz, for instance, we find *di-ote* as the only variant (Yrizar 1992: 227). In Bera, though, Yrizar (1992: 406) reports both *di-ote* and *di-e*.

<sup>55</sup> As Gómez & Sainz (1995: 251) point out, Leizarraga (1571) also presents the alternative suffixes *-e* and *-te* for the dative plural, the latter almost exclusively after sibilant (*drauet* ‘I have it to them’ ~ *drauztet* ‘I have them to them’). However, this is not attested in other varieties, and it seems most probable that it is due to some kind of analogy with the 3<sup>rd</sup> pl. erg. suffix, where *-e* and *-te* may alternate.

has them', *di-ra* 'they are', *dabil-tza* 'they walk') and across the same form in different dialects (B. *jako-z* 'they are to him/her/it', Cent. *zai-zki-o*). A relatively late incorporation of the plural marks is also patent on the erg. pl. marking morph. Here, the success of the originally competing variants *-te*, *-de* and *-e*, as well as the analogical extensions of each of them, show different results across dialects. To put just two examples, in B and S the most successful form has been *-e*, in contrast to *-te* in central varieties; on the other hand, especially in the East the variant *-de* has extended to intransitive plural forms where it was actually redundant (LN. *zira-de*, *dira-de*, etc.), but survives in transitive plural forms also in Old B. *dau-de*, etc. A similar reasoning is also valid for the dat. pl. marks. The most spread form is *-e* (probably < \**-o-de*), whereas the more agglutinative *-o-te* is present in some central varieties.

The conclusion drawn by Gómez & Sainz (1995: 257) is: "This dialectal variation regarding the shape and position of pluralizers suggests a more recent character for number agreement with respect to person agreement". The obvious inference that we can make from this well-supported assertion is that, at least during a certain stretch of time, the verb had agreement markers for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns but no number markers at all. Consequently, this category was absent from the verbal morphology.

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## LABURPENEA

### *Numeroaren kategoria euskaraz: I. Alderdi sinkronikoak eta historikoak*

Artikulu baten lehenbiziko zatia da honako hau; hain zuzen ere, numero gramatikalari ageriko eta nolabaiteko aurkakotasunarekin, euskal morfologiako alderdi guztiak sinkroniaren eta diakroniaren arabera aztertzen dituen artikulua. Aurkakotasun horrek hainbat balio ditu kategoria lexiko desberdinetan: sg. / pl. / mugagab. izenetan (etxe-a, etxe-ak, etxe); sg. / pl. erakusleetan (hau / hau-ek); mugagab. izenordain galdekatzaile/erlatiboetan eta zehaztugabeetan (zenbait etxe); sg. / pl. izenordain pertsonaletan (ni / gu); eta sg. / pl. aditzen pertsona marketan (na-bil / ga-bil-tza, da-bil / da-bil-tza, da-kar-t / da-kar-gu, da-kar / da-kar-tza, da-kar / da-kar-te...). Zati honek bi atal ditu. 1. atalean, kategoria horien adierazpenak euskara moderno estandarrean aztertzen dira. 2. atalean, berriz, adierazpen horiek dialektikoki eta historikoki lan-tzen dira, ahal den neurrian, historian izan duten bilakaera arakatzeko asmoz.

**Gako hitzak:** numeroaren kategoria, numero gramatikala, singularra, plurala, mugagabea, euskara.

## RESUMEN

### *La categoría del número en euskera: I. Aspectos sincrónicos e históricos*

Esta es la primera parte de un artículo en el que se analizan sincrónica y diacrónicamente todos los aspectos de la morfología vasca con cierta oposición manifiesta al número gramatical. Esta oposición presenta distintos valores en las diferentes categorías léxicas: sg. / pl. / indef. en los sustantivos (etxe-a, etxe-ak, etxe), sg. / pl. en demostrativos (hau / hau-ek), indef. en los pronombres interrogativos/relativos e indefinidos (zenbait etxe), sg. / pl. en los pronombres personales (ni / gu), y sg. / pl. en las marcas personales de los verbos (na-bil / ga-bil-tza, da-bil / da-bil-tza, da-kar-t / da-kar-gu, da-kar / da-kar-tza, da-kar / da-kar-te...). Esta parte incluye dos apartados. En el apartado 1, se analizan las expresiones de estas categorías en euskera moderno estándar. En el apartado 2, se tratan estas expresiones dialéctica e históricamente, con el fin de rastrear su evolución histórica en la medida de lo posible.

**Palabras clave:** categoría de número, número gramatical, singular, plural, indefinido, euskera.



## RÉSUMÉ

*La catégorie du nombre en basque: I. Aspects synchroniques et historiques*

C'est la première partie d'un article où l'on analyse du point de vue synchronique et diachronique tous les aspects de la morphologie basque avec une nette opposition envers le nombre grammatical. Cette opposition présente plusieurs valeurs dans les différentes catégories lexiques: sg. / pl. / indef. Dans les substantifs (*etxe-a*, *etxe-ak*, *etxe*), sg. / pl. dans les démonstratifs (*hau* / *hau-ek*), indéf. dans les pronoms interrogatifs/relatifs et indéfinis (*zenbait etxe*), sg. / pl. dans les pronoms personnels (*ni* / *gu*), et sg. / pl. dans les marques personnelles des verbes (*na-bil* / *ga-bil-tza*, *da-bil* / *da-bil-tza*, *da-kar-t* / *da-kar-gu*, *da-kar* / *da-kar-tza*, *da-kar* / *da-kar-te...*). Cette partie se compose de deux paragraphes. Dans le premier d'entre eux on analyse les expressions de ces catégories en basque moderne standard. Dans le deuxième, on aborde ces expressions du point de vue dialectique et historique afin de suivre, dans la mesure du possible, son évolution historique.

**Mots clé:** catégorie de numéro, numéro grammatical, singulier, pluriel, indéfini, basque.

## ABSTRACT

*The category of number in Basque: I. Synchronic and historical aspects*

This is the first half of an article in which all sectors of Basque morphology with some overt opposition for grammatical number are synchronically and diachronically analyzed. This opposition presents different values across lexical categories: sg. / pl. / indef. on nouns (*etxe-a*, *etxe-ak*, *etxe*), sg. / pl. on demonstratives (*hau* / *hau-ek*), indef. on interrogative/relative and indefinite pronouns (*zenbait etxe*), sg. / pl. on personal pronouns (*ni* / *gu*), and sg. / pl. on the personal marks of verbs (*na-bil* / *ga-bil-tza*, *da-bil* / *da-bil-tza*, *da-kar-t* / *da-kar-gu*, *da-kar* / *da-kar-tza*, *da-kar* / *da-kar-te...*). This half includes two points. In Point 1, the expressions of these categories in modern standard Basque are analyzed. In Point 2, these expressions are discussed dialectally and historically, in order to track their historical evolution as far as it is possible.

**Key words:** category of number, grammatical number, singular, plural, indefinite, Basque.