
**FORMULAS IN THE MIND: A PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION
TO DETERMINE IF ORAL FORMULAIC THEORY MAY BE
APPLIED TO THE BASQUE CASE**

FORMULAK BURUAN: AHOZKO FORMULEN TEORIA EUSKAL KASUARI APLIKA
DAKIOKEEN FROGATZEKO HASIERAKO IKERKETA

FÓRMULAS EN LA MENTE: UNA INVESTIGACIÓN PRELIMINAR PARA DETERMINAR
SI LA TEORÍA FORMULÁICA ORAL SE PUEDE APLICAR AL CASO VASCO

FORMULES DANS LA MÉMOIRE : UNE RECHERCHE PRÉLIMINAIRE POUR
DÉTERMINER SI LA THÉORIE FORMULAÏQUE ORAL PEUT ÊTRE APPLIQUÉE AU
CAS BASQUE

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Hainbat adituk "kliché", "errezitalpen-zerati" edo "formula" moduko hitzak erabiltzen dituzte inprobisatzaileen jario eta emankortasuna azaltzerakoan. Kantariek hainbat eredutako "ideia-zeratiak" dauzkate buruko fitxategian antolatuta. Bertsolaritzak formularik erabiltzen ez duela esaten da, nabiz eta ez den hori frogatu duen ikerketarik. Bertsoreen edukiak emaitza jakin bat proposatzen dio entzuleari, eta zenbait kasutan, emaitza zehatz bat eta bakarra. Bapatean 97 liburuan bildutako bertsoen azterketaren arabera, ezin esan genezake bertsolaritzan formularik erabiltzen denik, ez baita horren aldeko argudiorik; edonola ere, ikerketa sakonago batek emaitza hobeak ekarriko lituzke.

Varios expertos usan términos tales como "kliché", "pieza de recitación" o "fórmula" para explicar cuál es el secreto de los improvisadores para poder realizar composiciones de una manera tan fluida. Los cantantes tienen "esquemas de idea" archivados en su repertorio, modelos de diferentes tipos. Se piensa que el bertsolarismo no utiliza fórmulas, aunque ningún estudio haya certificado dicha creencia. De hecho, el contenido de un verso permite que la audiencia espere cierto resultado, y en algunos casos, resultado único e inequívoco. Un estudio de los bertsos transcritos en Bapatean 97 muestra que no hay evidencias que puedan demostrar la existencia de fórmulas en el bertsolarismo; de todas formas, una investigación más profunda sobre el tema obtendría resultados más concluyentes.

Several experts use terms such as "kliché", "recitation-part" or "formula" to explain how performers are able to compose fluently. Singers have "idea-parts" added to his repertoire, repeated or followed patterns. Bertsolaritza is thought to have no formulas, even if there has never been any study about this phenomenon. The content of a verse leads the audience to expect a certain outcome, and in some cases, an inevitable one. An examination of the bertsos transcribed in Bapatean 97 shows that there is no clear evidence that could demonstrate bertsolaritza's formulas; anyway, a lengthier examination of the subject would yield more conclusive results.

Plusieurs experts utilisent des termes comme "kliché", "pièce de declamation" ou "formule" pour expliquer quel est le secret qui ont les improvisateurs pour pouvoir effectuer de longues compositions d'une manière tellement fluide. Les chanteurs ont des "schémas d'idée" archivés dans leur répertoire, des modèles de différents types. On pense que le bertsolarisme n'utilise pas de formules, même s'aucune étude n'a certifié cette croyance. De fait, le contenu d'un vers permet que l'audience attende un certain résultat, et dans quelques cas, résultat avéré unique et évident. Une étude des bertsos transcrits en Bapatean 97 montre qu'il n'y a pas de preuves qui peuvent démontrer l'existence de formules dans le bertsolarisme ; de toutes manières, une recherche plus profonde sur le sujet obtiendrait des résultats plus concluants.

FORMULAS IN THE MIND: A PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION TO DETERMINE IF ORAL FORMULAIC THEORY MAY BE APPLIED TO THE BASQUE CASE

In an earlier article I broached the subject of Basque orality in relationship to Basque nationalism. The scope of that discussion allowed only a surface discussion of the form and structure of the art of bertsolaritza, surrounded by a great deal of information about the state of Euskara, the Basque language, and the relationship between the language and the nationalist movement. In this paper, I would like to select some ideas espoused in the broader field of orality studies and examine the process of the creation of bertsoak (verses extemporaneously sung by the bertsolari or Basque troubadour) in an attempt to identify whether or not formulaic theories can be applied to the Basque art.¹

In his Theory of Oral Composition, Foley provides thumbnail sketches of different approaches to oral theory. Radlov speaks of "idea-parts" and "defines the singer's art in terms of how idiomatically and even artistically he handles" the "recitation-parts" (cited in Foley, Theory, 12). Friedrich Krauss speaks of "Klichés" used by the singer in order to compose fluently and add to his repertoire. Thus a guslar puts the Klichés in order when composing a song of unfamiliar subject matter (cited in Foley, Theory, 13). Arnold van Gennep also explains the phenomenon in terms of juxtaposition of clichés. The nature of the clichés is fixed. Only the order of placement can vary (discussed in Foley, Theory, 13).

In bertsolaritza we cannot explain the phenomenon in terms of multiformity where entire lines can be substituted by others in the retelling of an old tale. The tales are contemporary, dealing with modern topics which are assigned moments prior to the performance, and the repetition of lines, indeed, of words, would be judged a fault in Basque bertsos. Duggan says,

"There has been general agreement that any group of words bounded on either side by a natural pause or caesura and repeated in substantially the same form (allowing for inversions, paradigmatic variations and a few other admissible modifications) should be counted as a formula." (Duggan, "Formulaic" 84)

Do such groupings exist within the verses of the bertsolaris? There are two ways to examine such a possibility. One would be by reviewing the verses of one bertsolari to see if such groupings exist within the work of a single artist. Duggan did something similar when he used a computer-aided method to determine repetitions within separate poems (Duggan, "Formulaic" 88). Duggan says, "By confining the examination of each poem's formulas to those which can be distinguished through a scrutiny of the poem itself, we are at least assured of working with phrases which possessed an identity as formulas in the mind of the poet who uttered them" (89). The other way to search for groupings would be to examine

the verses of several bertsolaris for the existence of any groupings they might have in common. Duggan felt a comparison of poems would entail great difficulty owing to disparate orthographies and dialects. The same could be said of the separate works of the Basque bertsolaris.

The bertsolaris and Basque scholars who study them believe that each verse is unique and no patterns are repeated or followed. This is the general wisdom regarding bertsolaritza. However, no one has actually examined the verses for such patterns. Perhaps the nature of the language Euskara provides groupings of meanings, rather than groupings of words. The post-position nature of Euskara and the frequent use of affixes, often multiple affixes, can imbue what appears (or is considered) to be a single word with a group of meanings which is often represented in other languages by groups of words. Would an examination of Basque bertso (verses by bertsolaris) reveal any patterns of this nature?

MINI-METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

In an effort to discover whether the Basque bertso demonstrates any formulaic qualities, I examined the bertsoak created by two bertsolaris as transcribed in the collection entitled Bapatean 97.

In order to explore this idea, I examined the transcribed verses of bertsolaris in competition. I felt that this would provide the closest model since the competitions are recorded and the verses are then transcribed for publication. No written revisions would occur in these verses. I chose two bertsolaris who competed in various competitions and whose verses were recorded and transcribed in the Bapatean series.²

In his conclusion to Immanent Art, Foley tells of the guslar Bajgoric' who uses the modern name of a village (Markovac) in his song and describes it as "accursed" (kleti), a descriptor that hardly seems appropriate since the village was named after a Serbian hero (244-245). The guslar maintained that the line had to be sung that way. Foley points out that the guslar's motivation is one of aesthetics, not a desire to emulate the literary rules and textual manipulations to which we have become accustomed in a society of the written word.

In the Basque case, the bertsolari is also more concerned with the aesthetics of the creation than with other factors. If a bertsolari's topic is a historical one, the historical facts of the case are not the bertsolari's primary concern. That is, in all cases, the bertsolari is charged with creating an aesthetically pleasing bertso. And the judges of the competitions are looking for aesthetic qualities, not recitation of facts.

Foley's "retailoring" of Iser's critical method known as Receptionist theory can be applied easily to the Basque phenomenon, or more accurately, the experience of *bertsolaritza* is a superb demonstration of the validity of the theory as Foley reinvents it.

"[...]Receptionalism offers [...] a direct and powerful way to come to terms with the dynamism of the oral traditional work. With certain adjustments in the critical parameters, we can take advantage of its focus on reader / audience participation and co-creation of the experienced work and correspondingly deemphasize the literary, post-traditional values and assumptions that have become so much a part of our unconscious critical heritage [...]." (Foley, *Immanent*, 42-43)

The phrase "audience participation and co-creation of the experienced work" is exactly what Aulestia is discussing when he says the audience is a necessary part of the art of the *bertsolari*. The words take on vibrant meaning as you sit with an audience that is complicit in the *bertsolari*'s performance to the extent that it sings the closing lines of the *bertso* along with the *bertsolari* as he extemporaneously creates them.

The nature of the *bertso* is part of the reason an audience can perform this feat. The content of the verse leads the audience to expect a certain outcome, and the demands imposed by the melody provide not only a potential outcome but in some cases, when the content strongly indicates the conclusion, even an inevitable outcome.

In the oral traditional genres discussed by Parry, Lord, Foley, and others, repetition of certain elements of the story provide contextual clues to the listener. However, in the Basque case, the story is different every time, new and fresh, with no historical context for the listener to refer to. Even in the structure of the verses, repetition is frowned upon and a performer can lose points for repeating a word (much less a phrase). Under these circumstances, there must be other characteristics of the *bertso* that allows audience complicity to the extent that listeners can co-create the *bertso* contemporaneously with the *bertsolari*.

Seeking these characteristics, my attention was snagged by Dorson's somewhat contradictory statement in *Folklore and Fakelore* (135) :

"If an oral poem or recital is the unique production of one mind, it will represent a creative energy and artistic imagination of a different order from the efforts applied to transmitting a piece previously heard and known, in whole or in part. Improvisation involves re-creation, no original creation." (Dorson 135)

Upon closer examination, the contradictory nature of his statement revolves around his use of the word improvisation to refer to the retelling of a previously heard tale or song.³ The Basque *bertso*

does not appear to involve re-creation. When the word "improvisational" is used in conjunction with *bertsolaritza*, the speaker is referring to the extemporaneous creative activity that produces an original *bertso*.

However, is a *bertso* "the unique production of one mind"? That appears to be the question of the moment. How can an audience co-create the final lines of some *bertsos* if the creation is completely unique? Lord spoke of the audience reacting actively to the oral performance, and also of the affect these reactions have on the performer. When the performer's creation is formulaic, both the audience's reaction and the performer's next line may be anticipated (Lord, *Singer*; Renoir, 104). Can this be turned around to imply that if an audience can anticipate the performer's next line, there is then *de facto* an element of formularity in the performance itself?

Each *bertso* is created around a different topic, and the words appear to be unique in each case, within the confines of a shared language. What are the other factors vital to the creation of a *bertso*? The melody is a vital factor, and it imposes constraints upon the language with regard to rhythms and rhymes. Hájú (95) describes the importance of melody in Samoyed epic songs in two theses:

"1. In Yurak folk poetry melody has a very important role: it is the invariant (constant) part of the song, while the words of a song live only together with melody. Without melody and rhythm they have no aesthetic value.

2. This principle appears in such a way, that words of a verseline being shorter than melody-curves are to be modified, adjusted to the melodic curve. For the lines to reach the set length, to be adjusted to the melody, glides, expletive syllables and meaningless particles may be added to the word-endings or even inserted between syllables, or some words already uttered by be chanted anew." (Hájú, 95)

Melody is equally important in *bertsoak*, albeit with some variations on the theses above. In the Basque *bertso*, it can also be said the melody is the constant part of the song. I would hesitate to say that the words have no aesthetic value without the melody, but my hesitancy most likely stems from my own acculturation to a society of written letters. Modern *bertsoak* are recorded, transcribed, and published in written form, and thus the orality of the *bertso* begins to cross the line into written territory. However, in the experiential environment of a performance, it can certainly be said that the words would not exist without the framework of the melody.

With regard to the second thesis point, the *bertsolari* is required to construct the verbal context in such a way as to fit the notes of the melody. Glides and meaningless particles are not allowed, and repetitions are considered a major error. However, in both instances, the Yurak and the Basque, the melody rules the creation of the verse.

But could there be more? Could the language itself be assisting the bertsolari and the audience at the moment of co-creation? And could these factors of melody and language conspire to create "formulas of the mind"?

Gerhard Gesemann defined and illustrated the "composition-scheme" of the South Slavic improviser. This scheme consisted of a narrative structure with a beginning, middle and end which could be used by the improviser as a guide for placement of verses. (discussed in Foley, *Theory*, 14)

Within bertsolaritza, the artist is not placing verses within the structure of an existing story or historical tale, at least, not in the same sense as those who passed on the oral epics. But structure is provided in various ways. The gaijartzaile or "giver of topics" presents the bertsolari with a scenario around which verses will be created.

In addition, although a bertsolari extemporizes verses on a topic supplied at the moment of creation, each bertso is required to demonstrate a certain amount of narrative structure. An example of such a topic illustrates the setting provided by the gaijartzaile. In a competition held in Ordizia on January 1, 1997, gaijartzailea Joserra Garzia gave the following assignment to J. Agirre and Murua, two of the bertsolaris competing against each other:

"You, Murua, used to be a shepherd, now you're a policeman. Unable to make a living as a shepherd, you left everything behind and fled to the city. They put you to directing traffic; there you are directing traffic at a moment when the traffic is heavy, and your sheepdog that you left on the mountain comes to you and starts licking you."

Hi Murua lehen artzain hintzen, orain ertzain. Artzaintzatik ezin bizi, eta hirira alde egin huen denak han utzita. Trafikoa zuzentzen jarri haute; trafiko handia dagoen momentuan han hago trafikoa zuzentzen, eta mendian utzitako hire artzain-txakurra etorri zaik eta botak miazkatzen hasi. (Bapatean 27, p. 43)

The bertso must make sense by itself. It should have a strong ending line or "punch line." Furthermore, it should contribute to the overall story of the finished product. Often two bertsolaris are creating bertsos in alternating order, replying to the bertso created by the previous performer. The best verses will clearly related to what the other bertsolari is singing, and all the bertsos together should form a whole that tells a story or completes an argument. The judges at competitions take all these factors into account when they are scoring a performance.

Although the lyrics composed by the bertsolari are endlessly varied, each verse has a structure required by the melody that is imposed upon the performer immediately prior to the initiation of the creation of verses. In the case of the sheepdog scenario above, along with the topic, the melody "Salbatoreko ermitan" is also imposed. That melody has the rhythm and rhyme pattern known as

zortziko nagusia or "the big eight." The bertsolari knows at once that the verse will contain eight lines alternating ten and eight syllables each with the rhyme occurring on the shorter line, and the last line in the verse will be sung twice (making the verse look like a nine-line verse).

Various melodies are employed in this fashion, all of them well known to the bertsolaris and to the audience, and each one requires definite meter and rhyme patterns. The number of melodies used for this purpose seems overwhelming to a non-native. However, they represent a lifetime of cultural accumulation and, in the case of some bertsolaris, they are studied in bertsolari schools where aspiring artists practice the required melodies. A quick glance at the four-volume set entitled Bertso doinutegia (A bertso melody book) reveals that there are 266 melodies that have the "big eight" rhythm and rhyme pattern. These melodies also have original lyrics attached to them, and in the original lyric, if a line was repeated, that is a clue to the bertsolari that the corresponding new lyric that fits the notes of the repeated line should also be repeated in the new extemporaneous verse.

How Bertsolaris Learn the Art

With all this talk of rhythm and rhyme and how a bertso is created, it might be instructive to examine one of the methods for training young bertsolaris. Xabier Amuriza's Zu ere bertsolari "You also a bertsolari" provides much insight to the process and, as a by-product, to the structural creation of a bertso. In the search for "formulas of the mind," no greater research tool can be found than this step by step guide to creating bertsos.

The first step is choosing a melody (12). Since the accepted norm is one syllable per note of melody, this selection will govern the rhythm or syllable count of each line of the bertso.

The second step is rhyme (13-14). Amuriza's book instructs the learner to pick a word and build a list of rhyming words from which a performer can choose a few to use in the bertso. Rhyme is addressed several times in the book, but more in the form of exercises than in theory. Students practice placing rhymes in the appropriate location when mentally outlining a verse.

The third step is rhythm (17) or the need to build a preliminary thought or phrase into a bertso with the correct number of lines, each containing the required number of syllables that will fit the melody chosen in step one.

On pages 34 and 35 of his method, Amuriza provides four groups of words and phrases to be studied or memorized by the student. These groups contain:

1. one-syllable words;
2. two-syllable words;
3. words of three or more syllables; and
4. adverbs that can be used to finish or fill in a line.

The emphasis where these lists are concerned is syllable count, being able to select quickly from groups of words that will ensure the proper rhythm.

More lists are provided on pages 97 through 102. The first consists of common words that appear in more than one form. For example, if a bertsolari wants to say "you all" *zuek*, but needs three syllables instead of two, this list offers the variation *zeroiek*. Next a group of suffixes is provided, with variations that allow a bertsolari flexibility again with syllables, such as the two and three syllable varieties of *tako* / *tarako* and *bera* / *behera*, and also with rhyme, in the case of pairings such as *antz* / *untz* and *antza* / *untza*.

A list of suggestions is also provided for lengthening or shortening verb forms as needed. A performer can use *genuen* or *genun*, *dakien* or *dakin*, *nintzateke* or *nintzake*, to comply with the required number of syllables per line.

Also provided are lists of synonyms and like words that can be memorized and used in different circumstances.

After examining these methods, can we say that bertsolaris use formulas in the construction of their verses? The need for formulaic work for the bertsolari is clearly stronger in the area of rhythm than in rhyme or story content. Formulaic theory in other oral literatures is generally concerned with content, with pieces of a story, or with phrases that are combined to create a new telling or singing of a tale. If we stretch the definition of formula to include not only content but also the process of fulfilling a required rhythm, then we might be able to say that bertsolaris do employ "formulas of the mind" when creating extemporaneous verses, even though these formulas are not phrases that are memorized or repeated to build a story.

The next question is whether or not this process is apparent in the verse itself.

AN ABBREVIATED STUDY OF THIRTY-SIX BERTSOAK

For the purpose of this brief study, I examined thirty-six bertsoak created in competition by two bertsolaris, J. Aguirre and Murua, during events held in 1997. The lyrics of those bertsoak were recorded, transcribed, and published a year later in the volume *Bapatean 97*. Twenty of the verses were created by Aguirre (Appendix 1) and sixteen by Murua (Appendix 2).

Having discussed the emphasis placed on rhythm in the bertsolari training method, I confess I did not count syllables to verify that each verse completes the required rhythm since errors of this type are not at all common. I take it on faith that these experienced bertsolaris have complied with the rhythmic demands of the melodies used for their verses.

My examination of these bertsoak was limited to the rhyme patterns in an attempt to uncover any words or phrases that might demonstrate a favoritism on the part of the performer or a tendency to repeat certain words or phrases from verse to verse.

Of the twenty verses by J. Aguirre, eleven employed the same part of speech when forming rhymes. Nouns were used in four bertsoak, verbs were used in three, the inessive case was used in three, and adjectives were used in one.

(See Figure One)

Of the sixteen verses by Murua, eight employed the same part of speech or grammatical case or element when forming rhymes. Nouns were used to make the rhymes in three bertsoak, verbs were used in two, the inessive case was used in two bertsoak, and the end of clause marker -teko was used in one verse.

(See Figure Two)

Thus, out of thirty-six bertsoak, nineteen or 53% rely on the use of one part of speech or grammatical case or element in order to make the rhyme.

If we examine the bertsoak from the point of view of rhyming pairs, as opposed to complete verses, we find seventy-six possible rhyming pairs, and fifty of them or 66% match with regard to part of speech or grammatical case or element. This increases to fifty-one instances or 67% if we use the final rhyme as our starting point and work up to the first rhyme in each bertso.

This examination of rhyme showcases the elements of Euskara that make versifying easier than in some other languages. Its postposition nature means that any group of nouns can be made to rhyme, and nouns that share a single final syllable can become very strong or rich rhymes when suffixes and postposition markers are added, as seen in J. Aguirre's rhymes from page 44 of Bapatean 97:

p. 44, rhymes in -kea (J. Agirre)

nekea	noun	[exhaustion + singular nominative marker]
ta kea	noun	[fervor + singular nominative marker]
trukea	noun	[exchange + singular nominative marker]
pakea	noun	[peace + singular nominative marker]

Conclusions

I did not find any favoritism with regard to specific bare words or phrases. However, there was obvious favoritism shown toward certain grammatical cases and parts of speech. In the small sample examined here, nouns, verbs, and the inessive case were the clear favorites for use in rhyming.

Due to the nature of the Basque language, a case could be made that the postposition structure of the language serves as an oral formulaic guide with regard to rhyme, keeping in mind that these one, two, and three syllable similarities are not what others in the field intend when they speak of oral formulas.

There was no evidence in the bertsoak of groups of words "bounded on either side by a natural pause" as described by Duggan, unless of course we take into account the line break after each rhyme, but this was not necessarily what Duggan intended by his description. Furthermore, in bertsolaritza, there are no recognizable "idea parts", no "klichés" to be manipulated into a new form, at least not in the sense defined by Radlov, Krauss or van Gennepe.

The scope of this paper (and the impending deadline of the Conference for which it was written) limited my examination to a small sample of bertsoak, but I believe a lengthier examination of the subject would yield more conclusive results.

Figure One: **Use of Like Parts of Speech or Grammatical Elements in Aguirre's Rhymes**

p. 44	nekea	noun
	ta kea	noun
	trukea	noun
	pakea	noun
p. 55	uzteak	noun
	besteak	noun
	ikusteak	noun
	(bertso was six lines long, with three rhymes)	
p. 55	jartzea	verbal noun
	hartzea	verbal noun
	hiltzea	verbal noun
	(bertso was six lines long, with three rhymes)	
p. 256	dana	verb used as noun
	erdibana	verb used as noun
	emana	verb used as noun
	dana	verb used as noun
p. 166	dendu	verb
	ematen du	verb

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	mantendu	verb
	bazendu	verb
p. 167	datozkio	verb (with NORI)
	zaizkio	verb (with NORI)
	dizkio	verb (with NORI)
	gaizkio	verb (with NORI)
p. 256	prenda	verb
	ertenda	verb
	egoten-da	verb and causative
	izaten-da	verb and causative
p. 258	ilean	inessive
	zailean	inessive
	ipumasailean	inessive
	sailean	inessive
p. 259	azkenian	inessive
	lanian	inessive
	egonian	inessive
	zanian	inessive
p. 259	ahotan	inessive
	gehiotan	inessive
	frankotan	inessive
	galtzekotan	inessive
p. 260	bajua	adjective
	atajua	adjective
	flojua	adjective
	jua	adjective

Figure Two: Use of Like Parts of Speech or Grammatical Elements in Murua's Rhymes

p. 44	dena	noun (made from verb)
	nabarmena	noun
	sena	noun
	nintzena	noun (made from verb)
p. 82	gazteak	noun
	besteak	noun
	tristeak	noun
	uzteak	noun

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p. 115	jokoak	noun
	mutikoak	noun
	mokoak	noun
	hegoak	noun
	bezelakoak	noun
p. 44	aditu	verb
	jarraitu	verb
	aurkitu	verb
	zaitu	verb
p. 83	irizten	verb
	pizten	verb
	sinisten	verb
	iristen	verb
p. 66	jaietan	inessive
	besoetan	inessive
	bertan	inessive
	ametsetan	inessive
p. 231	barrenean	inessive
	aldamenean	inessive
	gehienean	inessive
	lanean	inessive
p. 231	eusteko	end of clause marker (oración final)
	gorpuzteko	end of clause marker (oración final)
	hasteko	end of clause marker (oración final)
	aberasteko	end of clause marker (oración final)

NOTES

1. There are surprising similarities between the nature of Basque bertsoak and some of the verses created within the African oral tradition. Finnegan describes funeral verses from East Africa:

"In a number of cases, too, there is clear evidence of the kind of simultaneous composition/performance described by Lord for Yugoslav poets. One instance -- the *nyatiti* "lyre" song of the Luo of East Africa -- is described by Anyumba (1964). Here the composer/performer builds on common and known themes to create a new and

unique composition of his own. The most common context for his performance is a funeral when he is expected to deliver laments." (Finnegan "What" 248)

The composer sits and drinks and sings while admirers drop pennies in his plate. His laments are partly musical but contain stock phrases. He also includes the names of relatives of the dead and adds details about his family, and he elaborates on incidents in the life of the deceased. Finnegan continues,

"In the absence of a strong epic tradition, however, the great African form seems to be the panegyric. Praise poetry is a developed and specialist genre in most of the traditional states of Africa and one that is logically often regarded as the most highly valued and specialized of their poetic genres. In this poetry incidents in the hero's life are depicted, but in general the chronological element is relatively undeveloped, and the style is laudatory rather than narrative. It thus differs from epic poetry in its tone and intention, as well as in length: the number of lines in African panegyric poetry is generally to be reckoned in -- at most-- hundreds rather than the thousands of much epic poetry." (Finnegan "What" 250)

This praise poetry brings to mind the verses sung for different families on St Ageda's day by bertsolaris. There is also an element of payment involved there, as well, as the families reward the bertsolari(s) involved in the performance.

2. One of the people who did the recording provides us with an example of the dedication and humor involved in an undertaking of this sort. The existence of the automobile means that fans of bertsolaritza can travel to many competitions, often two or three in the same weekend. Recorder Josu Goikoetxea relates in the Bapatean 97 volume,

"Every weekend there will be one or two sessions, and there I go in my old car, the tape recorder tucked into my green backpack, most often with a headache from my hangover stabbing me between the ears. [...] I'll leave there at two a.m., if all goes well, and return home at three a.m. The next day, let's suppose it's Sunday, there's another session in the afternoon; I grab a greasy cup of coffee in a friend's tavern and once again in my old car -- the radio doesn't work--, I'm on the road again [...]. I'll get home around nine p.m." (Bapatean 97, p. 7)

(Asteburuero saio bat edo bi izango da, eta hor noa kotxe zaharra hartuta, grabagailua motxila berdean sartuta, gehienetan biharamunak dakarren burukomina belarri artean iltzaturik. [...]) Eta handik goizeko ordu bietan irten --dena ondo badoa-- goizeko hiruretan neure herrira itzultzeko. Hurrengo engunean, demagun igandea dela, beste saio bat dago arratsalde; lagunaren tabernan kafe petrolioduna hartu eta berriz kotxe zaharrean, --irratia ez dabil--, banoa bidean [...]. Bederatziak inguruan etxean izango naiz.)

3. Dorson's discussion of Oral Literature and Oral Traditional Literature are pertinent to another Basque form, the oral folktale, which has been studied in great detail by José Miguel de Barandiarán. Transcriptions of selected folktales have been translated and published in English in A View from the Witch's Cave.

Index 1: Analysis of J. Aguirre bertsoak from Bapatean 97

p. 40, rhymes in -ik (J. Agirre)

aitamenik	partitive
dut nik	pronoun
kemenik	partitive
hemendik	ablative
oraindik	adverb (based on ablative)

p. 43, rhymes in -on (J. Agirre)

daon	verb
egon	verb
on	adjective
konpon	idiomatic expression based on verb

p. 44, rhymes in -eta, -ata (J. Agirre)

beteta	adverb
det-eta	verb and causative
aukera-ta	verb and causative
aterata	adverb

p. 44, rhymes in -kea (J. Agirre)

nekea	noun
ta kea	noun
trukea	noun
pakea	noun

p. 45, rhymes in -ela (J. Agirre)

zatozela	subordination marker
bezela	adverb
zitezela	subordination marker
bestela	adverb

p. 55, rhymes in -ztu, -xtu (J. Agirre)

ez du	verb
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laztu verb
juxtu adverb
(bertso was six lines long, with three rhymes)

p. 55, rhymes in -steak, -zteak (J. Agirre)

uzteak noun
besteak noun
ikusteak noun
(bertso was six lines long, with three rhymes)

p. 55, rhymes in -tzea (J. Agirre)

jartzea verbal noun
hartzea verbal noun
hiltzea verbal noun
(bertso was six lines long, with three rhymes)

p. 165, rhymes in -te (J. Agirre)

daukate verb
digute verb
bate adverb (shortened form of batere)
diote verb

p. 166, rhymes in endu (J. Agirre)

dendu verb
ematen du verb
mantendu verb
bazendu verb

p. 167, rhymes in -zkio (J. Agirre)

datozkio verb (with NORI)
zaizkio verb (with NORI)
dizkio verb (with NORI)
gaizkio verb (with NORI)

p. 168, rhymes in -asua, -osua (J. Agirre)

erasua noun
arazua noun
peligrosua adjective
goxua adjective

p. 256, rhymes in -enda (J. Agirre)

prenda verb
ertenda verb
egoten-da verb and causative
izaten-da verb and causative

p. 256, rhymes in -nik (J. Agirre)

nik	pronoun
azkenik	adverb
eramanik	adverb ending
diranik	negative subordinate marker

p. 256, rhymes in -ana (J. Agirre)

dana	verb used as noun
erdibana	verb used as noun
emana	verb used as noun
dana	verb used as noun

p. 258, rhymes in -ilean (J. Agirre)

ilean	inessive
zailean	inessive
ipumasailean	inessive
sailean	inessive

p. 259, rhymes in -nian (J. Agirre)

azkenian	inessive
lanian	inessive
egonian	inessive
zanian	inessive

p. 259, rhymes in -otan (J. Agirre)

ahotan	inessive
gehiotan	inessive
frankotan	inessive
galtzekotan	inessive

p. 260, rhymes in -jua (J. Agirre)

bajua	adjective
atajua	adjective
flojua	adjective
jua	adjective

p. 260, rhymes in -ola (J. Agirre)

ajola	noun
nagola	verb and subordinate marker
zegola	verb and subordinate marker
odola	noun

Index 2: Analysis of Murua bertsoak from Bapatean 97

p. 44, rhymes in -ena (Murua)

dena	noun (made from verb)
nabarmena	noun
sena	noun
nintzena	noun (made from verb)

p. 44, rhymes in -itu (Murua)

aditu	verb
jarraitu	verb
aurkitu	verb
zaitu	verb

p. 45, rhymes in assonance A / E (Murua)

jotake	adverb
kalte	adverb
aparte	adverb
didate	verb

p. 45, rhymes in -ana (Murua)

emana	noun (made from verb)
laztana	adjective
lana	noun
dijoana	noun (made from verb)

p. 65, rhymes in -ela (Murua)

nobela	noun
epela	noun
papela	noun
nauela	verb with subordinate marker

p. 66, rhymes in -etan (with one weak -tan) (Murua)

jaietan	inessive
besoetan	inessive
bertan	inessive
ametsetan	inessive

p. 66, rhymes in -ira (Murua)

dirdira	noun
Gabirira	allative
dira	verb
begira	noun

p. 82, rhymes in -steak/-zteak (Murua)

gazteak	noun
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besteak	noun
tristeak	noun
uzteak	noun

p. 82, rhymes in -ina (Murua)

adina	noun
imajina	noun
sorgina	noun
bagina	verb

p. 83, rhymes in -izten / -isten (Murua)

irizten	verb
pizten	verb
sinisten	verb
iristen	verb

p. 115, rhymes in -oak (-koak / -goak) (Murua)

jokoak	noun
mutikoak	noun
mokoak	noun
hegoak	noun
bezelakoak	noun

p. 116, rhymes in -ori (Murua)

zori	noun
erori	verb
tori	verb
txori	noun
hori	pronoun

p. 116, rhymes in -ala (Murua)

makala	adjective
tamala	adverb
hegala	noun
berehala	adverb
gerala	verb and subordinate marker

p. 231, rhymes in -nean (Murua)

barreanean	inessive
aldamenean	inessive
gehienean	inessive
lanean	inessive

p. 231, rhymes in -stekoa (Murua)

eustekoa	end of clause marker (oración final)
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gorpuzteko	end of clause marker (oración final)
hasteko	end of clause marker (oración final)
aberasteko	end of clause marker (oración final)

p. 232, rhymes assonant a/o and -ago (Murua)

akabo	adverb
oparo	adverb
sakonago	comparative
dago	verb

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