

# Elvis Presley, God and Jane: the Germanic proprial article in a comparative perspective

Joachim Kokkelmans

*Ghent University / Università degli Studi di Verona*

## Abstract

In several Germanic languages and dialects (e.g. German, Luxemburgish, Norwegian), definite articles and personal pronouns are not only used with common nouns and independently, respectively (e.g. *the woman*, *she*), but also with personal proper names (literally *the Jane*, *she Jane*). In some of the languages which use this marker named *proprial article*, its use is restricted to specific types of persons (e.g. family members), whilst in others, the article can be found in various and even surprising contexts (e.g. *the God*, *he (Elvis) Presley*). Although at first glance the use of the proprial article seems to be relatively unpredictable as to what is considered grammatical and what is not, varying inside and between dialects, this paper posits the existence of an underlying universal hierarchical structure which determines the possible restrictions of the use of the proprial article.

## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In modern Germanic languages, definite articles and personal pronouns are used to indicate referentiality and “known-ness”<sup>2</sup> in the discourse (i.e. differentiating rheme from theme): for example, *the woman* and *she* both refer to a supposedly known, unique and/or previously mentioned woman. Definite articles contrast with indefinite articles (*a woman*), which indicate unknown, unspecific or new entities in the discourse. Despite the different views in the literature on the roles of knownness and uniqueness when defining definiteness (see e.g. Jenks 2015: 203f.; Schwarz 2009: 1-4), there is a wide consensus on the fact that definite articles and personal pronouns serve to indicate that the entity referred to has been mentioned earlier in the discourse and is thus already known, or that it is (supposed to be) already known elsewhere to the interlocutors (Schmuck & Szczepaniak 2014: 97f.; Schwarz 2009: 3; Werth 2014: 152).

In the earlier stages of Germanic languages, definiteness was only optionally marked morphologically (e.g. in Proto-Norse, see Torp & Vikør 2014: 49, and Old High German, see Stedje 2007: 21f., 95). However, all Germanic languages grammaticalised definite articles, which developed “from a purely deictic element which has come to identify an element as previously mentioned in the discourse” (Greenberg 1978: 252). Furthermore, all Germanic languages developed a more extensive use of these articles with common nouns (compare e.g.

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<sup>1</sup> I am very thankful to Johan Brandtler for his good counsel and reviewing, as well as to my friend *the* Sebastiaan de Schagt, with whom I started this study and who helped me fulfil this work with precious comments.

<sup>2</sup> Hereafter written *knownness*, this word will mean in the present paper “the fact of being known [to somebody]”, in this case the fact of being known to the interlocutors taking part in the discourse. The term *familiarity*, used more frequently in the literature, will be avoided because of potential interferences with others of its meanings (e.g. “intimate”, “colloquial”, “informal”) which also play a (different) role concerning proprial articles.

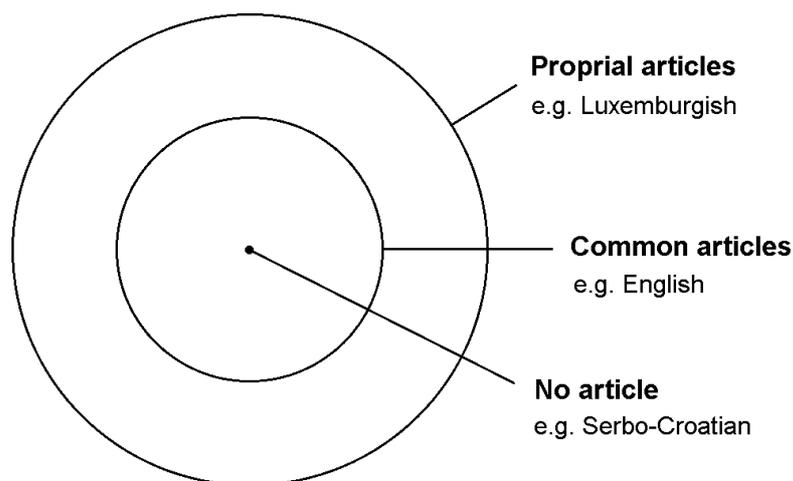
Szczepaniak 2011: 78). In some languages and dialects, the use of articles extended further to proper names, leading to the proprial article, i.e. a definite article or personal pronoun used with a proper name (in Germanic languages, only with personal names). This is exemplified by the Luxemburgish and northern Swedish examples in (1) (vgl.lu: 13; Delsing 2003: 12):

(1)

- a) Du gesäis de Jean, hien ass de Mann vum Marie.  
 You see *the* John, he is the husband of *the* Mary.
- b) En Erik ha jift sä vä a Lisa.  
*He* Eric has married (himself with) *she* Lisa.

At first, the occurrence of a definite marker can seem redundant, as proper names “appear to be definite by nature” (van Langendonck 2007: 157). However, this extension of the domain of use of the definite article or the personal pronoun, both primarily expressing knownness inside the discourse, can be understood as a means of expressing “social” knownness, outside of the discourse, towards the person named. As Sigurðsson (2006: 219f.) remarks, the proprial article is used to express “familiarity or givenness”, i.e. the fact that the named individual is known to both interlocutors, exactly as they would use a definite article with a common noun to signal that it is already known.

Another important observation is that the use of a definite article with a personal name must be considered as *peripheral* to the use of a definite article with a common noun, as the presence of the former necessarily implicates that of the latter: a language with a definite article for personal names must have one for common nouns as well, but not necessarily inversely (*the Jane* implicates *the woman*, but not inversely). There are thus: 1) languages with no definite article (e.g. Serbo-Croatian), 2) languages with only a common definite article (e.g. standard English), and 3) languages with common and proprial definite articles (e.g. Luxemburgish). Diachronically, these three types can be understood as successive development stages in Greenberg’s universal grammaticalisation path of demonstratives (Greenberg 1978).



I. Hierarchical representation of three possible uses of the definite article in natural languages.

As I will demonstrate below, hierarchies such as in fig. 1 are useful in understanding the structure behind apparently variable and unpredictable restrictions as to which use of the proprial article is possible in a specific language, and which use is not.

In the next subsections, I provide a definition of the proprial article as well as an overview of its possible uses, followed by an overview of its sociolinguistic dimensions. Section 2 accounts for the spread of the proprial article in the modern Germanic languages, and gives examples of the various restrictions which govern its use in different languages. In section 3, I formulate a hypothesis which sheds light on the regular structure behind this variation, and test this hypothesis on several Germanic languages and dialects in section 4. Subsection 4.2 summarises the results, whilst section 5 widens the perspective towards a complete model of restriction hierarchies. Section 6 aims at understanding the diachronic path towards the grammaticalisation and extension of the proprial article, followed by a summary in section 7.

## 1.1. Definition

The term *proprial article* refers to a definite article or a personal pronoun used with a family word<sup>3</sup> or a personal name, denoting an animate being (person or animal) and functioning as a name. The proprial article can be used with the following noun categories (Delsing 2003: 12; Håberg 2010: 60ff.):

- (2)
  - a) First names of personally known individuals (e.g. *the Jane*)
  - b) First + last names of personally known individuals (e.g. *the Johan Brandtler*)
  - c) Last names of personally known individuals (e.g. *the Brandtler*)
  - d) Names of personally known animals, for example domestic animals (e.g. *the Einstein*, a cat; *the Marguerite*, a cow)
  - e) Nouns of personally known family members used as proper names (e.g. *the dad*)
  - f) First names of not personally known individuals (e.g. *the Elvis*)
  - g) First + last names of not personally known individuals (e.g. *the Arthur Schopenhauer*)
  - h) Last names of not personally known individuals (e.g. *the Schopenhauer*)
  - i) Names of fictional characters, being human, animal or other kinds of animates (e.g. *the Hulk*, *the Tom & Jerry*, *the Nessie*, *the R2-D2*)
  - j) Biblical figures and sacred individuals (e.g. *the Abraham*, *the Sarah*, *the Jesus*, *the Mary*, *the Joseph*, *the God*, *the Yahweh*)

As Dagsgard (2006: 38) mentions, family words are only used as names with a proprial article if they can refer unambiguously to individuals (i.e. *the sister*, for example, is only possible in families with exactly one sister).

Delsing (2003: 12) remarks that the proprial article does not occur in a vocative use, nor in constructions with the verb *be named/called* or similar naming constructions. However, it is compatible with predicative uses of the verb *to be*, as e.g. in (3c). It is also not used in constructions in which the proper name is not part of a full sentence, as e.g. in headlines of newspaper articles:

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<sup>3</sup> In this paper, I will use the term *family word* instead of *family name* for e.g. *father* or *mum*, this to avoid interferences with European languages (e.g. French) in which *family name* literally means *last name*.

(3)

- a) (\*The) Jane! Where are you?
- b) She is called (\*the) Jane. / Her name is (\*the) Jane. / She was baptised (\*the) Jane.
- c) This is the Jane.
- d) Merkel and Macron in Paris: negotiations to continue until end October.

As Sigurðsson (2006: 220) explains, the proprial article is incompatible with naming constructions because it expresses knownness, whilst naming constructions are typically designed to introduce new information. Additionally, the word *Jane* as used in (3b) does not intrinsically refer to the unique individual bearing this name, but rather to the name itself.

It is important to distinguish between “true” proprial articles on the one hand, and other uses of definite articles preceding a person name on the other. In the latter case, the proper name is used as a common noun rather than as a proper name (as explained by Werth 2014: 164f. and Sigurðsson 2006: 220):

(4)

- a) The Simpsons
- b) A Lannister always pays his debts.
- c) The sufferings of the young Werther / The younger L. Wittgenstein
- d) The Heinrich I knew is long gone.
- e) I know five Bryans, and even two Bryan Smiths.

As shown in (4), person names used as a common noun can be modified with adjectives, indefinite articles and be treated as a countable substantive, whilst proper names per definition imply uniqueness. Such uses are also even possible in languages lacking a proprial article.

Finally, one must make the important distinction between *obligatory* and *optional* proprial articles. Johannessen & Garbacz (2014) argue that it is per definition obligatory, but also admit that its “obligatory status in some dialects can be questioned” (Johannessen & Garbacz 2014: 13). In fact, many languages and dialects display optional proprial articles, as will be shown below.

The definition of obligatory and optional use is as follows. The proprial article is *optional* in a language or a dialect if i) one can find occurrences of the same noun in the same syntactic context, with and without proprial article, and ii) if the occurrences without article are deemed grammatical by native speakers. The proprial article is *obligatory* if its omission is deemed ungrammatical by native speakers.

Werth (2014) shows that in languages with an optional proprial article, its use is determined by several syntactic and pragmatic factors (e.g. topicalisation). Such detailed syntactic analyses fall outside of the scope and purposes of this paper, which will rather consider proprial articles generally as either optional or obligatory.

## 1.2. Sociolinguistic aspects of the proprial article

As will be shown in the next section, the proprial article is far more used in dialects than in standard languages, at least in the European languages. It is therefore traditionally associated with dialectal and informal speech. For example, it is found in many Flemish, Norwegian and Swedish dialects, but not in the Dutch, Norwegian and Swedish standard (written) languages.

In standard German, it is considered informal and is often avoided in formal contexts (Lodder 2012: 89f.; Deutsche Grammatik 2.0). Furthermore, German speakers tend to perceive the use of the proprial article as more acceptable if the person referred to is a child (Atlas zur deutschen Alltagssprache). In Icelandic, it is also associated with informal and/or dialectal speech (Sigurðsson 2006: 219). Luxemburgish, although a standard language, is no exception to this dialectal connotation, for it is closely based on the Luxemburgish dialects and deliberately retains many dialectal features; it was considered a group of dialects until its standardisation in 1984 (Kartheiser 2007: 56). The frequent use of the article with personally known individuals, domestic animals and close family members in the examples above in (2a-e) reinforces its oral, informal and familiar connotation. Especially in dialects in which it is optional and/or restricted to personally known individuals, it expresses proximity and knownness (Håberg 2010: 8), as it accentuates the contrast between familiar persons and unknown or distant individuals. This distinguishes the proprial article from the resembling pronominal psychological demonstrative (see Johannessen 2008b), which expresses unknownness and distance.

Because of its close association with dialects, one could consider that the proprial article so to say stands and falls with their use. As they hitherto have tended to lose ground in favour of standard languages (an indicator for this is the observation that most European endangered languages are dialects; see Moseley 2010: 25), the proprial article has generally been in decline. Johannessen & Garbacz (2014: 13) say that in Norway, “there has been a development towards a narrowing of the geographical distribution of the PPA [JK: i.e. preproprial article] in recent years”, which has led to its disappearance in e.g. Oslo (Johannessen 2008a: 65). This is amongst others confirmed by Håberg’s (2010: 4) remark that the proprial article in the dialect from Voss (western Norway) is more used by elder speakers. In the data from Oppdal (Norway) in the Nordic Dialect Corpus (Johannessen et al. 2009, hereafter ScanDiaSyn), younger informants use it less than elder informants, or do not use it at all.

Nevertheless, the proprial article is not necessarily on the verge of extinction, as its occurrence is not confined to dialects but is also seen in the informal speech of some standard languages. It regains ground by percolating through the informal, spoken regional variants of the standard languages (or: regiolects), which are on the rise (Weiß 2005: 303; Atlas zur deutschen Alltagssprache). By paving its way through the regiolects, the proprial article can thus avoid disappearance through dialect loss (compare Werth 2014: 173).

## 2. The spread of the proprial article in modern Germanic languages<sup>4</sup>

In the continental Germanic languages, the proprial article consists of a definite article preceding the noun (e.g. *the Jane*). In contrast, the proprial article in Scandinavian dialects is formally either a personal pronoun preceding the noun (e.g. *she Jane*) or a definite article appended at its end (e.g. *Jane-the*). Delsing (2003: 12) uses the term *prepropriell artikel*, ‘preproprial article’, for articles preceding the noun, and *postpropriell* for articles following it. Postproprial articles are far rarer than preproprial, and restricted to relatively small areas in

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<sup>4</sup> This section focuses on the proprial article in modern Germanic languages and dialects. For a (non-exhaustive) account of its spread in European languages, see (1) in the appendix.

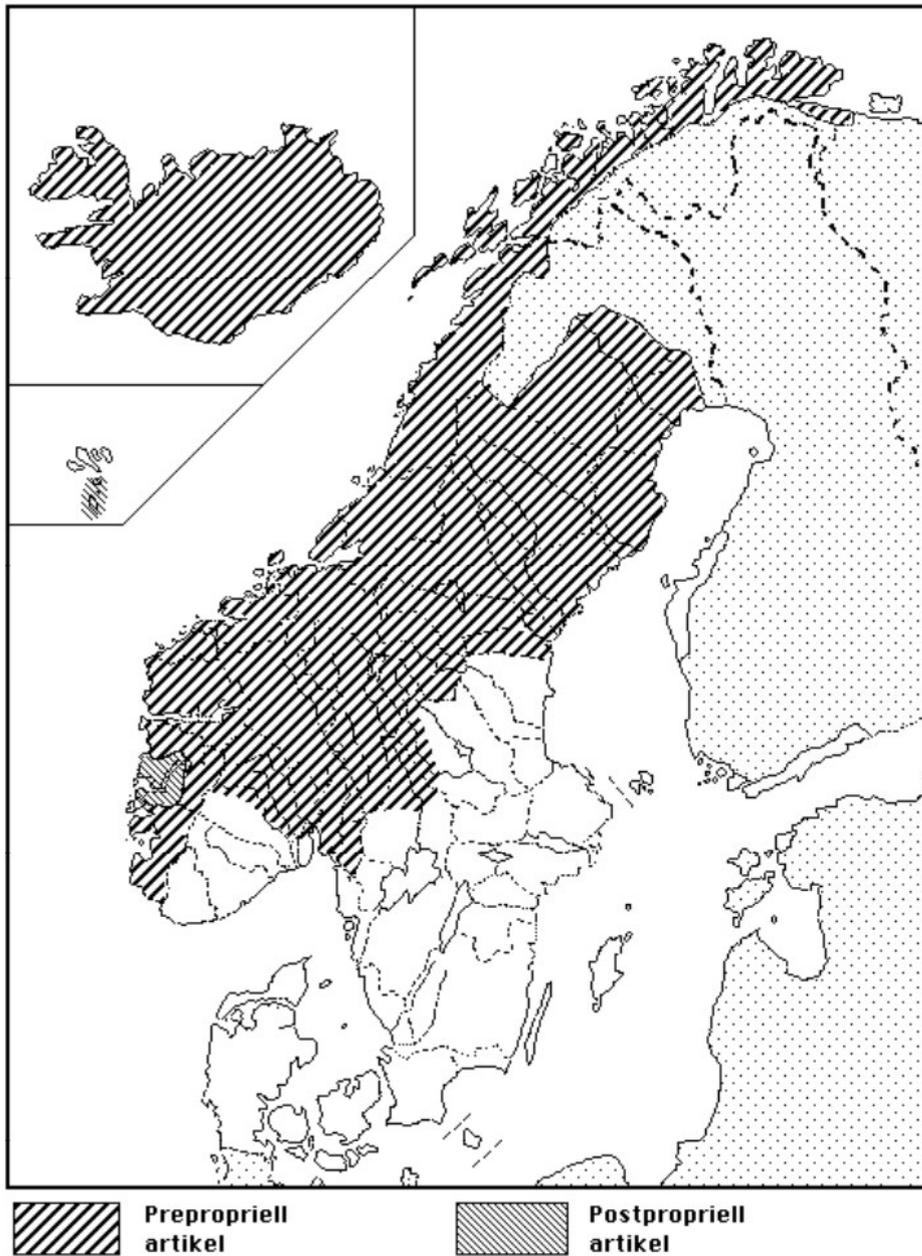
Scandinavia, namely the southern Faroes and Hordaland in western Norway. In standard Swedish, occurrences of the postproprial article are relatively sparse (Delsing 2003: 14ff.). Because of this scarcity, this paper will concentrate predominantly on the preproprial article.

In Scandinavian dialects, the proprial article is relatively widespread, especially in the north (Norway, northern Sweden, Iceland and the Faroes). In Iceland, it is optionally used in informal speech but avoided in written form (Delsing 2003: 12). In the southern Faroes, the postproprial article is sporadically and optionally used (Delsing 2003: 17). In Norway, proprial articles are omnipresent except in some northern varieties in multilingual areas, the southeast and the dialects in and around Oslo (Håberg 2010: 7; Delsing 2003: 13). In Sweden, the proprial article occurs in the north and in regions at the border with Norway.

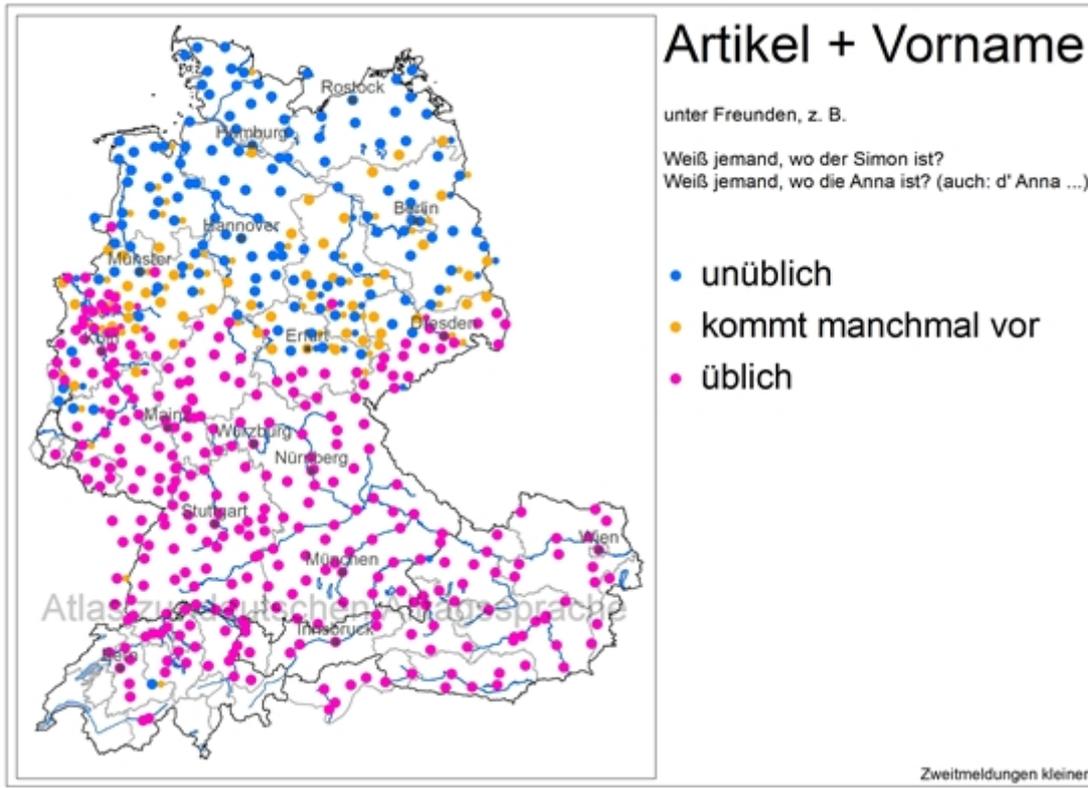
Concerning the British Isles, my research on this subject has not led to any results. As the literature seems not to deal with English proprial articles, I assume that they must be absent from English varieties until proven otherwise.

The preproprial article is found throughout the continental Germanic dialect continuum, which spreads from the Alps to the Netherlands. It is mainly used in the south (Austria, southern Germany and Switzerland) and the west (Alsace, Luxemburg, Limburg, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Flanders), but is rare in northern Germany (Bellmann 1990: 274), where it is restricted to specific pragmatic uses (see Werth 2014).

KARTA 3. PROPRIELL ARTIKEL



II. *The spread of the proprial article in Scandinavian languages, taken from Delsing (2003: 16).*



III. *The use of the proprial article with first names in Luxemburg and German speaking countries, taken from the atlas of the German colloquial language (Atlas zur deutschen Alltagssprache). Purple corresponds to “usual”, yellow to “sometimes” and blue to “unusual”.*

Interestingly, the border dividing the regions in Germany where the proprial article is used extensively and those where it is considered unusual roughly corresponds to the border between High and Low German (see Bellmann 1990: 274 and (2) in the appendix). This observation can be correlated with the more extensive use of dialects below this border (see (3) in the appendix). Thus, the regions where the local dialects are most spoken correspond roughly to those regions where the proprial article is most used in informal speech and considered usual, showing again the association of proprial articles with dialectal speech.

The geographic and historic distance between the Scandinavian and the continental Germanic areas using the proprial article, on one hand, and the formal difference between the Scandinavian personal pronoun and the continental definite article, on the other hand, seem to indicate the absence of any influence or relatedness in the use of the proprial article in these areas. Consequently, the proprial article may have originated spontaneously from at least two different sources, especially when considering that it is not used at all in the area between the Scandinavian and the continental Germanic proprial article (i.e. in Denmark and northern Germany). Thus, it seems unlikely that the presence of the proprial article in both language groups be due to language contact. It can also not have been an inherited feature from Proto-Germanic, because the earliest traces of Germanic languages lack any proprial article.

As Delsing (2003: 14) describes, in some Swedish dialects, proprial articles can only be used with names of personally known individuals, whereas *the Jesus* or *the Elvis* are unthinkable. In other Swedish dialects as well as in Luxemburgish, *the Jesus* is attested and considered grammatical (Delsing 2003: 14; Evangelium.lu: 44, *Joh 11, 1-5*), and certain

Limburgish dialects even allow *the God* (own data from a native informant). Some dialects allow only family words and first names to have a proprial article (Håberg 2010: 14f.), others allow it before family names or “historical” names like *Cleopatra* as well (Håberg 2010: 13f.). In other words, considering the many attested uses of the proprial article listed in (2) combined with the fact that different dialects allow different uses, the global pattern of its restrictions can seem at first chaotic and unpredictable. In the next section however, I hypothesise that there is a common and uniform underlying pattern which can explain this variation.

### 3. Hypothesis

When comparing the possible uses of the proprial article, it is clear that some of them, e.g. *the God* or *the Presley*, are perceived as more “deviant”, more marked than others, as e.g. *the Jane*. This means that certain less marked noun categories (e.g. first names of personally known individuals) are generally more likely to have a proprial article, whilst the marked ones (e.g. fictive, distant or unknown individuals) are rarer. In turn, it implies that some uses of the proprial article are *central*, and others more *peripheral*.

In this paper, I posit that this observation is based in human perception, and that there are universal logical constants expressed as underlying rules which can predict what is possible and what is not in each language. In the next section, I compare the different restrictions across several Germanic languages and dialects to set up a hierarchical model which can account for this underlying representation. This model can be visualised as the spheres in fig. 1 in the first section, with central and more peripheral uses, where the presence of a peripheral use implies that of all uses inside that circle (for example, “a language with proprial articles before last names must have a proprial article before first names, but not necessarily inversely”). The hypothesis to be tested in this paper can be summarised as follows:

- (5) There exists a hierarchical structure, reflecting a universal representation, which can predict for any natural language which uses of the proprial article are grammatical in that language based on other possible uses. Such a hierarchy is never violated inside a single language variety.

### 4. A restriction hierarchy for the use of the proprial article

In this section, I analyse four restrictions of the use of the proprial article listed in (2):

1. The social distance of the person referred to (i.e. “personally known” versus “celebrity” and “fictional character”)
2. The person’s potential status as a sacred figure (either “profane” or “sacred”)
3. The type of name used (i.e. “first name”, “last name” or “family word”)
4. The gender of the person referred to

I investigate each restriction in several Scandinavian dialects before comparing it to the same restriction in continental Germanic languages. Considering that the continental and the Scandinavian proprial articles are historically unrelated (as explained in section 2), a comparison of distant and unrelated dialects allows us to gain a deeper insight into the rules which are valid in any of these dialects, avoiding the risk of being influenced by the “fallacy of

relatedness”<sup>5</sup>. A map showing the dialects and languages mentioned in this paper is to be found in the appendix (1a).

#### 4.1. Personally known vs. celebrity or fictional character

The first use that will be tested here is the knownness, or social distance, between the interlocutors in the discourse and the person about whom they speak. As Delsing (2003: 14) remarks, many Swedish dialects do not allow the proprial article to be used with persons who are not personally known to the speakers. Thus, expressions as *the Jane* are authorised (if and only if the interlocutors know Jane personally), but “expressions as the Jesus or the Elvis (Presley) are unthinkable in many dialects” (own translation from Delsing 2003: 14). Similarly, Wood (2009) observes that the Icelandic proprial article “presupposes that the speaker and the addressee are both familiar with the person named” (Wood 2009: 8).

In her study on the preproprial article in three Norwegian dialects (Voss in Hordaland, Gausdal in Oppland and Kvæfjord in Troms) based on the Nordic Dialect Corpus (ScanDiaSyn), Håberg (2010) compared the possibility of using the article with the name of a personally known individual, a celebrity or a fictional character. In Kvæfjord, the use of the preproprial article seems to be most extended, as it is attested before personally known individuals, celebrities and fictional characters (Håberg 2010: 60f., 73). Concerning Gausdal, she explains that she lacks sufficient material, but mentions that all four informants judged sentences containing “han Elvis (Presley)” as being grammatical (Håberg 2010: 74). In Voss, however, only two of four informants accepted these sentences as grammatical utterances (Håberg 2010: 89f.). Interestingly, one of the informants from Voss declared the sentence with Elvis Presley to be ungrammatical, but uses himself the preproprial article with famous Norwegians as Arne Hjeltnes, Ivar Kvåle and Johan Fjellby (Håberg 2010: 91f.). According to Håberg, the informant could know the two first named personally, as both have been living in Voss, whilst the third comes from Sogn og Fjordane (another region in western Norway). This suggests that the informant makes a distinction between *near* celebrities, from his own cultural and geographical zone (i.e. Western Norway), and *distant* celebrities, as e.g. Elvis Presley. This would imply that the opposition “personally known” - “celebrity” is not a pure dichotomy, but rather a continuum ranging from close to distant, as judged individually by the speaker. The speaker can mark distance towards individuals he or she considers as strangers by not using the article, and mark closeness towards individuals considered as close or familiar persons, even if he or she doesn’t know them personally, by using the article. Individuals could therefore be placed on a scale from near to distant, as represented in table IV, which is based on the data of four informants from the ScanDiaSyn corpus (see appendix for examples):

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<sup>5</sup> I.e. believing a recurrent pattern in some languages to be universal whilst the similarities observed are only due to language contact and/or historical relatedness.

	a personally known individual	the mayor of this town	a celebrity born and raised in this region	distant celebrities, e.g. Elvis Presley
<i>roemskog_02uk</i>	V	-	-	X
<i>oppdal_10</i>	V	-	X	-
<i>oppdal_31</i>	V	V	X	-
<i>voss_03gm</i>	V	-	V	X
<i>oppdal_03gm</i>	V	-	V	-
<i>kvaefjord_01um</i>	V	-	-	V

IV. *The use of the preproprial article in the speech of four Norwegian informants, on a scale from near to distant individuals (own research in ScanDiaSyn). NB: “V” stands for “found with proprial article”, “X” for “found without proprial article”, and “-” for “no data”.*

I also searched myself in detail in the ScanDiaSyn corpus concerning the dialect from Oppdal (Trøndelag). There, one elder informant (*oppdal\_03gm*) uses the preproprial article consistently before personally known individuals as well as celebrities; another elder informant (*oppdal\_31*) does before personally known individuals and the mayor of the town, but not celebrities; and a younger informant (*oppdal\_10*) uses it only for personally known individuals.

As one informant from Kvæfjord demonstrates by using the preproprial article with the Incredible Hulk and Lara Croft, fictional characters can also have proprial articles. Concerning Icelandic, Sigurðsson (2006: 219) mentions the possibility of using the proprial article in front of the name of the Icelandic president, but mentions no more distant celebrity. The restrictions in the Norwegian dialects in Håberg (2010), Oppdal in Trøndelag (ScanDiaSyn) and Icelandic (Sigurðsson 2006) are summarised in table V:

	personally known	near celebrity	distant celebrities and fictional characters	
			distant celebrity	fictional character
Oppdal (elder informants)	V	V/X	V/X	-
Icelandic	V	V	-	-
Voss	V	V	V/X	-
Gausdal	V	V	V	-
Kvæfjord	V	V	V	V

V. *The use of the preproprial article with personally known individuals, celebrities and fictional characters in four Norwegian dialects and Icelandic (Håberg 2010, Sigurðsson 2006 and ScanDiaSyn). NB: “V/X” stands for “variation amongst speakers” or “optional”.*

If one finds some language in which distant celebrities consistently have an article but fictional characters don't (or the other way around), it must be concluded that “distant celebrity” and “fictional character” are two different categories in the hierarchy, otherwise not<sup>6</sup>. From the actual data, it is not possible to determine if there is a difference between these categories, and they must thus be considered as one, until a language is found in which a distinction is made. From the data in tables IV and V above, one can observe firstly that no dialect has a proprial article before the name of a celebrity but not before the name of a personally known individual, i.e. that “celebrity” necessarily implies “personally known”. Peripheral uses (towards the right end of the tables) imply, as predicted and confirmed here, central ones (at the left end): this also holds for gradations on the closeness scale (i.e. “distant celebrity” implies “near celebrity”). Secondly, another important observation is that variation (marked “V/X” in the tables) is found at the border, i.e. in the most peripheral amongst the possible uses, whilst central uses as e.g. “personally known” are more stable and consistent.

Continental Germanic languages and dialects seem to confirm the pattern found in Scandinavian dialects. Luxemburgish uses proprial articles consistently with names of personally known individuals as well as of all celebrities, e.g. “*d’Angela Merkel*” (RTL.lu: 18.08.2017). In the dialect from Eys, a town situated in the Dutch province of Limburg, personally known individuals and celebrities also have proprial articles (own data from a native informant). In *Kölsch*, the dialect from the nearby city Cologne, the article is used less stably and varies in the domain of celebrities, similarly to the dialect from Voss (Western Norway). Due to intense language contact between standard German (where celebrities normally have no proprial article<sup>7</sup>) and the original dialects from Cologne (where celebrities have one, compare Herrwegen 2017: 23), many speakers who are exposed to both influences will solve this conflict by deeming only close celebrities worthy of the article. For example, speaking about *the* Lukas Podolski (who is “*ene kölsche Jung*”, a Colognean) will be associated with familiarity and informal speech, whilst speaking of a Romanian ruler of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century will be associated with formal speech and result in the lack of the article. In this case, it is obvious that each speaker evaluates the closeness of the evoked person based on primarily subjective views. Therefore, its use with celebrities varies strongly amongst speakers, for it is only determined by the individual evaluation of the speaker instead of being a consistent rule. For example, one can find on the Colognean Wikipedia page for the South African writer Olive Schreiner the following sentence, which makes a clear distinction between this distant, less known celebrity and two well-known German celebrities from the Rhine region (Wikipedia):

(6) *Olive Schreiner woohr en Feminißßtin, en Sozjilißßtin, un woohr jääjen de Kirräsch. Se wooh orr en Fruünndin fum Eleanor Marx, däm Karl Marx sing Doochter.*

Olive Schreiner was a feminist, a socialist, and was against the Church. She was also a friend of *the* Eleanor Marx, the daughter of *the* Karl Marx.

In the article about Johannes Kepler, he is consistently deemed worthy of an article (5 out of 5 occurrences in full sentences), but not Leibniz and Newton (Wikipedia):

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<sup>6</sup> In table V and VI, they have been presented as two distinct columns inside one in order to give examples of both uses, but they must be considered as one category until proven otherwise.

<sup>7</sup> Except for some celebrities as e.g. Marlene Dietrich (Lodder 2012: 90), in which case the construction has an affective connotation (Schmuck & Szczepaniak 2014: 99).

(7) *Dä Johannes Kepler wohr enne Weßbeschafflo. (...) Däm Kepler sing Jesätz fun de Planetebewääjung wohr de Jrundlaach, op dä shpääder Leibnitz un Isaac Newton et alljemäijne Jesätz fun de Jravitazjuhn jefonge un opjeshtallt han.*

*The Johannes Kepler was a scientist. (...) The law of planet movements of the Kepler was the basis upon which Leibnitz and Isaac Newton later found and built the general law of gravitation.*

In some other texts (e.g. about Adolf von Egmond), occurrences with and without article vary freely, something which reflects the conflict in the writer's mental representation as to whether a certain celebrity is distant or close enough to have a proprial article. Here again, variation and inconsistency characterise "border cases", at the border of possible uses, whilst the uses with closer celebrities and individuals are more likely to be stable and consistent.

I also searched in the Database of spoken German (*Datenbank für gesprochenes Deutsch*, abbreviated DGD) for occurrences in the speech of individuals. Furthermore, the dialect from Beveren (East Flanders, Belgium) provided additional data for the comparison (based on own data from Flemish informants). The combined results are summed up in table VI:

	personally known	near celebrity	distant celebrities and fictional characters	
			distant celebrity	fictional character
ZW--_E_00260 (Northern Alemannic, DGD)	-	V	X	-
Beveren	V	V	X	X
Cologne	V	V	V/X	-
Luxemburgish	V	V	V	V
Eys	V	V	V	V

VI. *The use of the proprial article with personally known individuals, celebrities and fictional characters in five continental Germanic languages and dialects (own data, vdl.lu: 13, RTL.lu: 18.08.2017 and DGD).*

## 4.2. Profane vs. sacred

In the previous section, it has been shown that the proprial article may express not only knownness, but also social closeness and familiarity, in varieties in which it is optional<sup>8</sup>. Inversely, in these same varieties, the absence of the article either expresses distance towards the person named, accentuating the fact that the person is not known or close, or respect, accentuating the fact that the person is too noble or revered to be considered familiar. Whilst

<sup>8</sup> It is obvious that in dialects in which the article is obligatory in combination with all possible names (i.e. all uses listed in (2)), it cannot express closeness and familiarity, as anyone has a proprial article and nobody could be marked as a familiar individual in contrast to others.

the previous section dealt with the former case, this section focuses on the latter, i.e. on sacred figures as e.g. *Jesus, Mary and God*<sup>9</sup>. Vocative and lexicalised constructions such as “*Oh God!*”, “*Gott sei Dank*”, “*God knows how many...*” etc. were excluded.

A look into the Scandinavian languages in the ScanDiaSyn corpus reveals that sacred figures can also have proprial articles, e.g. *she holy Mary* in the dialect from Målselv (Troms). When combining this restriction with the previous one in 4.1, it becomes apparent that the use of a proprial article with a sacred figure implies its use with celebrities and personally known individuals. This is illustrated in table VII:

	personally known	celebrities and fictional characters	secondary sacred figures	God
Ål (Buskerud)	V	V	-	X
Målselv (Troms)	V	-	V	-

VII. *The use of the preproprial article with personally known individuals, celebrities or fictional characters and sacred figures in two Norwegian dialects (own research in ScanDiaSyn).*

As will be shown below, the distinction between “secondary” sacred figures (e.g. Jesus and Mary) and God himself is needed, as some dialects allow only the former to have a preproprial article, and have none in front of the name of God. Therefore, God is the most peripheral use, and if God has a proprial article, all other categories must have one as well.

This hierarchy coincides with the one found in continental Germanic languages. In the Luxemburgish Bible for example, all apostles and holy figures as e.g. Jesus and his mother Mary consistently have a proprial article (Evangelium.lu: *Rom 1, 1-7; 16, 1-7*). However, God has no article, distinguishing him from the other biblical figures. Jesus only has a proprial article if mentioned with his first name (e.g. “*dem Jesus Christus*”, *Rom 1, 1*), but not when solely mentioned as *Christ* (e.g. “*zu Christus bekéiert*”, *Rom 16, 7*). This distinction is perhaps to be linked with the fact that *Christ*, being originally a common noun, does not behave as an ordinary proper name in many languages (from Ancient Greek *χριστός*, ‘the anointed one’). In the Limburgish dialect from Eys (own data), which is also traditionally Christian, all biblical figures and even God have proprial articles. The results are summarised in table VIII below:

<sup>9</sup> This section accounts for sacred figures in Germanic languages and dialects, which are predominantly and/or historically Christian. However, the status of sacred individuals as e.g. *Jesus* is certainly not universal, for other religious views may consider him a historical figure. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the restriction hierarchy for sacred persons doesn’t stand universally: whilst other individuals (or none) may hold the place held by sacred figures, the structure of the hierarchy remains identical.

	personally known	celebrities and fictional characters	secondary sacred figures	God
Beveren	V	V/X	X	X
Cologne	V	V/X	V/X	X
ZW--_E_01748 (Southwestern German, DGD)	V	V	X	-
Luxemburgish	V	V	V	X
Eys	V	V	V	V

VIII. *The use of the proprial article with personally known individuals, celebrities or fictional characters and sacred figures in five continental Germanic varieties (DGD, Wikipedia (Jesus Christus, Ave Maria), evangelium.lu and own data).*

In Beveren, informants mention that using a proprial article with a sacred figure is considered as offensive or even sacrilegious. In Eys however, *der God* is considered a normal use. The assumption that God is the most peripheral use is confirmed by Luxemburgish and the dialect from Eys, showing that varieties exist in which secondary sacred figures have an article but not God, and others in which God has one and therefore also all uses inside the hierarchy.

### 4.3. Family word vs. first name vs. last name

This third section compares uses of a proprial article with family words (e.g. *the father* or *the mommy*), first names and last names. As to occurrences of the construction “first name + last name” (e.g. *Elvis Presley*), they will be considered as belonging to a category between “first name” and “last name”, for there are languages in which a distinction is made between this construction and the construction with a first or a last name (e.g. the Norwegian dialect from Lom og Sjøk and Icelandic, see Håberg 2010: 77 and Sigurðsson 2006: 219 respectively).

In Kvæfjord, the Scandinavian preproprial article is used with all three categories, whilst in the ScanDiaSyn data from Voss and Gausdal, only family words and first names are attested with an article. In both cases, the data concerning last names is insufficient to judge (Håberg 2010: 73, 87, 98). Johannessen & Garbacz (2014: 16) mention that “in many Norwegian dialects, (...) the preproprial article is used with given names and family relations and not surnames”. This observation is confirmed by Håberg (2010: 77) for the dialects from Toten and Lom og Sjøk. In Lom og Sjøk, she observes that the proprial article can be used with a single first name and a first name followed by a last name (e.g. *hon Live Håberg*), but not with a bare last name. Thus, last names are more peripheral in the hierarchy, as shown in table IX.

Sigurðsson (2006: 219) mentions that the proprial article in Icelandic is considered natural with family words and first names, but not full names (“first name” + “last name”), for it seems to contradict the familiarity with which the article is associated. When speaking about individuals such as the president, it can yet be perceived as normal. Although Sigurðsson says nothing about the use with a bare last name in Icelandic, it must be presumed that its patronymic naming

system makes it hard to compare with non-patronymic systems (as *Presley* refers to few individuals, whilst *Jónsson* can refer to all Icelanders whose father is named Jón).

	family word	first name	first name + last name	last name
Icelandic	V	V	??	-
Toten	V	V	-	X
Voss	V	V	-	-
Gausdal	V	V	-	-
Lom og Sjøk	V	V	V	X
Kvæfjord	V	V	V	V

IX. *The use of the preproprial article with family words, first names and last names in five Norwegian dialects and Icelandic (Håberg 2010, ScanDiaSyn, Sigurðsson 2006). NB: “??” stands for “unusual or doubtful”.*

Håberg (2010: 15) cites also a dialect description from Norderhov (Buskerud) in which only family words are mentioned as being used with a proprial article, indicating their potentially more central location in the hierarchy.

Continental Germanic varieties corroborate the data in table IX: last names are more peripheral and family words are more central than first names. In Luxemburg and Eys, all three categories have proprial articles. Dialect interviews of individuals in the DGD have also been considered, which confirm the hierarchy:

	family word	first name	first name + last name	last name
ZW--_E_02861 (Hattingen, Nordrh.-W., DGD)	V	X	-	-
ZW--_E_05826 (Herford, Nordrh.-W., DGD)	V	X	X	X
ZW--_E_05655 (Enger, Nordrh.-W., DGD)	V	V/X	V/X	X
Luxemburgish	V	V	V	V
Eys	V	V	V	V

X. *The use of the proprial article with family words, first names and last names in five continental Germanic varieties (DGD, RTL.lu, vdl.lu: 13, own data).*

#### 4.4. Woman vs. man

Although a vast majority of languages and dialects makes no distinction between women and men with regards to the proprial article, some differences related to the gender of the person named exist in some varieties.

In Hordaland (Norway), in the region around Bergen, the postproprial article is only used with male names (Håberg 2010: 9). In northern Sweden, the postproprial article also occurs mainly with male names (Delsing 2003: 17).

Eastern Flemish regiolects also only allow male first names to be preceded by an article (based on own data from informants):

(8)

- a) K'eb        den     Dirk    nog    nie     gezien.  
 I have     *the*    Dirk    yet    not    seen.  
 I haven't seen Dirk yet.
- b) (\*De)      Lisa    heeft    hare    verjaardag    gevierd.  
 (\**The*)     Lisa    has     her     birthday      celebrated.  
 Lisa has celebrated her birthday.

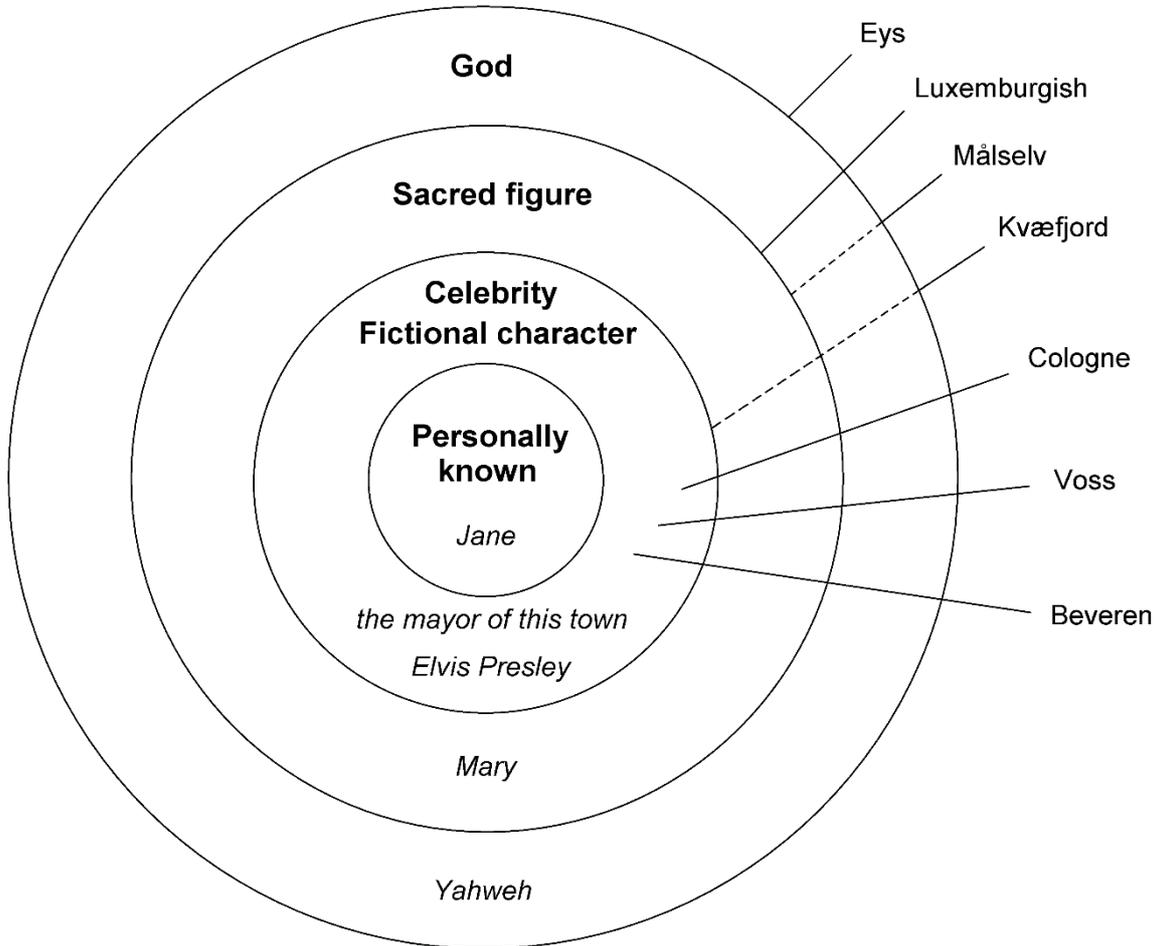
This trend is confirmed by the following quote in van Langendonck (2007: 158): “In Dutch (Flemish) dialects the article *de* ‘the’ is used before men’s names and sometimes before women’s names to express familiarity with respect to the name bearer”. Such a formulation clearly assumes that the use with male names is far more obvious and widespread than the use with female names. In these Germanic varieties, the proprial article seems thus to prefer male names.

These observations still leave us with many questions. Whilst it is not hard to imagine why the use of a proprial article with God might be more peripheral and “marked” than that with a familiar person, it remains very hard to understand why the use with women could be more peripheral. The universality of these observations becomes even more doubtful when considering other language families, e.g. Romance: in northern Italian, the situation is exactly opposite, as the proprial article is used more extensively with female names than male names (Viviani 2011; own data). Viviani also adds that the proprial article for women can have a pejorative meaning, and is even considered to have a sexist connotation. Differences between men and women seem thus to reflect cultural peculiarities rather than the underlying structure of a common human representation of the world.

To conclude, gender does not play an absolute and universal role in the use of the proprial article, but is rather subject to cultural variations. As much as e.g. sexism is not an absolute universal in the world’s cultures, it is not an absolute universal in the world’s languages either.

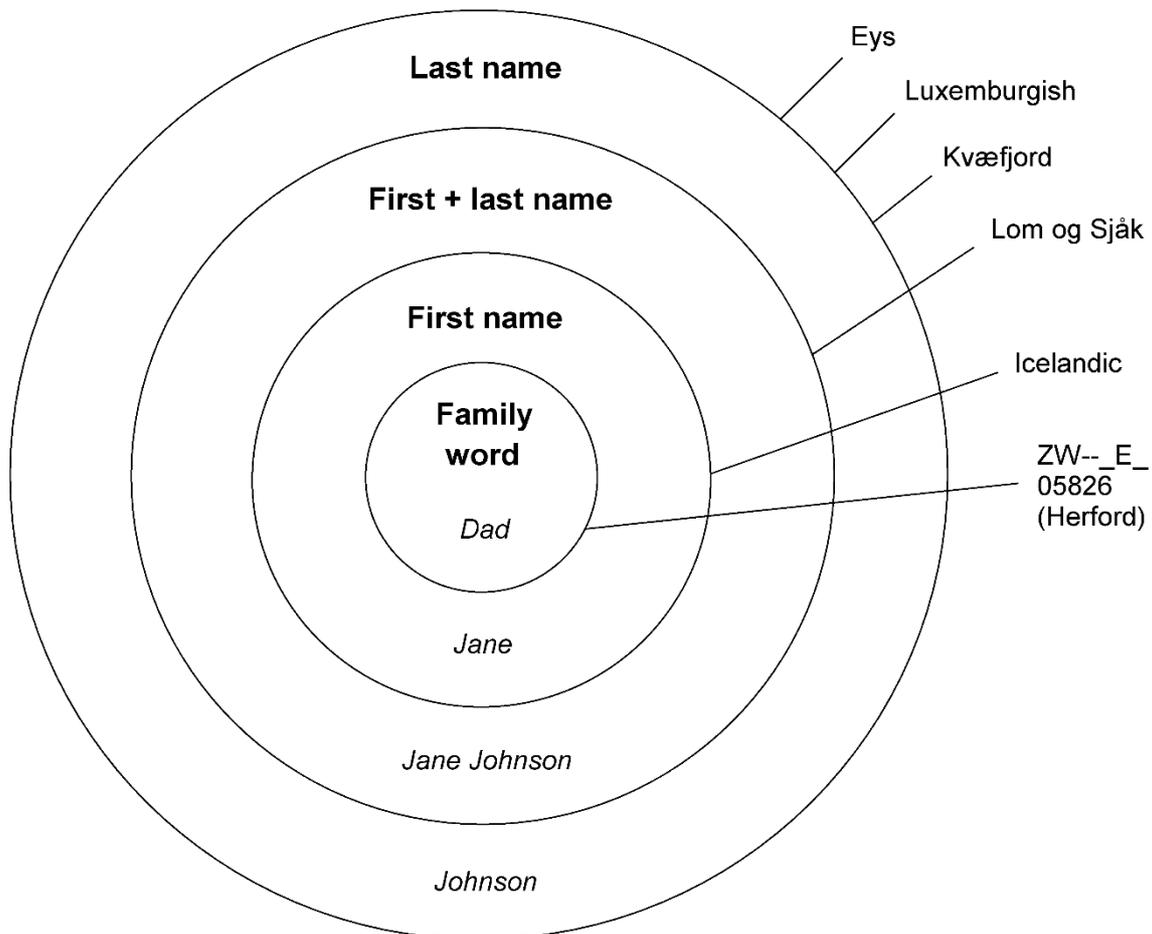
#### 4.5. The results: two models of restriction hierarchies

As has been demonstrated in 4.1 and 4.2, it is possible to set up a model of restriction hierarchies for the proprial article corresponding to social distance, starting from “personally known” and going as far as “God”. This is illustrated in the following figure:



XI. *Representation of the restriction hierarchy “personally known” vs. “celebrity/fictional character” vs. “sacred figure”, with examples from Scandinavian and continental Germanic varieties. The dotted lines for Kvæfjord and Målselv indicate a lack of data concerning sacred figures and/or God.*

The restriction hierarchy according to noun type, corresponding to section 4.3, is as follows:



XII. *Representation of the restriction hierarchy “family word” vs. “first name” vs. “last name”, with examples from Scandinavian and continental Germanic varieties.*

A question which still needs to be answered is how both hierarchies relate to each other inside a language. As there are numerous possible combinations of all categories, and perhaps a lack of dialect data to evaluate them all, this task can be assisted and simplified by logical deduction. I will turn to this issue in the next section.

## 5. Towards a complete model of restriction hierarchies

Some interactions of the two restriction hierarchies (fig. XI and XII) can be deduced from *a priori* logic, to obtain a (near-)complete model of restriction hierarchies.

Firstly, one must consider that “family word” implies “personally known” (because one necessarily knows one’s own family members personally), and that “first name” also implies “personally known” (because one calls personally known individuals by their first name). Inversely, “personally known” implies “family word” and “first name” for the same reasons. Secondly, the use with celebrities must imply the use with last names, for they are almost all

referred to by their last name<sup>10</sup>. If “celebrity” implies “last name”, it also implies everything which “last name” implies (i.e. “family word”, “first name”, and “first + last name”).

The (near-)complete restriction hierarchy of the proprial article thus looks as follows:

- (9) Family word > First name of personally known individual > First + last name of near celebrity > Last name of near celebrity > Last name of distant celebrity or fictional character > Secondary sacred figure > God

<i>noun type</i>	Family word	First name	First + last name	Last name		Secondary sacred figure	God
<i>social proximity</i>	Personally known		Near celebrity		Distant/fictional		
English	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
ZW-- _E_05826	V	X	X	X	X	X	X
?	V	V	X	X	X	X	X
Lom og Sjåk	V	V	V	X	X	X	X
Beveren	V	V	V	V	X	X	X
ZW-- _E_01748	V	V	V	V	V	X	X
Luxemb.	V	V	V	V	V	V	X
Eys	V	V	V	V	V	V	V

XIII. Complete model of the restriction hierarchies presented in this paper<sup>11</sup>, with posited (!) values for eight languages (not all categories for each dialect/language could be verified empirically).

Considering that (9) and table XIII are purely theoretical projections of the restriction hierarchy, further research is needed to verify the validity of this model in other natural languages.

The restriction hierarchy presented in this paper fits strikingly well into the extended animacy hierarchy in Villalba (2016: 179):

- (10) Extended animacy Hierarchy (Dixon 1979: 85 in Croft 1990: 130)

First/second person pronouns > Third person pronoun > Proper names > Human common noun > Nonhuman animate common noun > Inanimate common noun

<sup>10</sup> “Elvis” is a rare exception, which is only permitted by the fact that he is the only world-famous person with this first name. “Richard” is e.g. completely ambiguous, since it could refer to Wagner, Strauss, Lionheart...

<sup>11</sup> A complete model should also consider the use with names of domestic animals, which could not be studied here by lack of material. The use with names of domestic animals should imply the use with humans, something which is supported by the ranking in Caro Reina (2014: 200) of the similar onymic marker for animals in Catalan, half-way between human and inanimate.

Nicknames should also have their own place in this model, left from “first name”. In colloquial French as spoken in Brussels (own data), first names cannot have a proprial article, but nicknames can (optionally) have one (e.g. *le Bern* for *Bernard*, *le Jo* for *Joachim*). Their relationship with respect to family names remains however unclear, since family names can also optionally have a proprial article. More research is needed to clarify this question.

The leftmost objects on this scale are the most definite, and are therefore more likely not to have any article. In English for example, personal pronouns and proper names have no definite article, since they are considered “sufficiently definite” (compare *\*the I* or *\*the Mendelssohn*), whilst other objects on the scale have definite or indefinite articles. In English, the border between the use and non-use of the article is thus drawn between proper names and human common nouns. In Luxemburgish, the border is drawn more on the left, between third person pronouns and personal names. In Serbo-Croatian, the border is located at the rightmost corner, since nouns have no articles (recall fig. 1). The parallel between the restriction hierarchy of the proprial article and this animacy hierarchy is as follows: both scales start from entities which are not unique and therefore more likely to have definiteness markers (i.e. inanimate and animate common nouns and family words used as common nouns) towards individuals which are less numerous (e.g. first names), and finally reaching completely unique individuals (e.g. “I”, “God”). The most unique and peripheral entities are also the most definite, which is why they are less likely to have definiteness markers. It is thus possible to integrate the restriction hierarchy of the proprial article into the category “proper names” inside the animacy hierarchy:

- (11) Inanimate common noun > Nonhuman animate common noun > Human common noun > Family word used as a common noun > Family word used as a proper name > First name of personally known individual > First + last name of near celebrity > Last name of near celebrity > Last name of distant celebrity or fictional character > Secondary sacred figure > God > Third person pronoun > First/second person pronouns

### 5.1. Apparent violations of the restriction hierarchy

Interferences between conflicting varieties (e.g. in Cologne) as well as sociolinguistic factors and variation amongst speakers can influence the regularity of the use of the proprial article, and even lead to apparent violations of the restriction hierarchy. Yet, even in languages with a strong variation, the most central uses are generally the most stable, whilst uses at the border between the presence and the absence of the proprial article are most subject to variation. As posited in section 3, “[the restriction hierarchy] is never violated inside a single language variety”, or better: is never *systematically* violated inside a single language variety<sup>12</sup>, because apparent violations either occur in the conflict between coexisting varieties and registers, or in “artificial” loans of the proprial article in languages which have none<sup>13</sup>.

Optional and less extensive uses are found mostly in varieties characterised by their liminality, lying at the border with varieties which have more restricted uses. Such is e.g. the case for Colongian and other dialects from Nordrhein-Westfalen, or for regiolects of standard languages

<sup>12</sup> The observation made in Schmuck & Szczepaniak (2014) that proprial articles occur more often in front of last names than in front of first names in German witch trial protocols of the 16-17<sup>th</sup> century (implying a more central use for last names) does not contradict the hierarchy, because this article expresses distance from the perspective of the writer towards the person named (Schmuck & Szczepaniak 2014: 126). Therefore, it is rather a pronominal psychological demonstrative (Johannessen 2008b), which often looks like the proprial article but expresses distance instead of knownness, and can be used with common nouns.

<sup>13</sup> An example of this phenomenon is the use of proprial articles in French movies or songs. In Jean Girault’s movie *La soupe aux choux*, which takes place in rural France, Louis de Funès and other protagonists use the proprial article as vocative (“*le Glaude*”, “*la Francine*”), something which goes against a basic rule of the proprial article. Another example is the vocative use “*l’Émile*” in Jacques Brel’s song *Le Moribond*. Such violations show the will to imitate artificially (and in fact, incorrectly) French dialects from the perspective of the standard language.

such as French, which has itself no proprial article but has dialects with proprial articles. Inversely, dialects which are less or not exposed to neighbouring varieties with more restricted uses of the proprial article (e.g. Eys and Kvæfjord) are characterised by consistence and its obligatory use. Starting from this observation that optionality and less extensive uses of the proprial article occur at the intersection between several conflicting varieties or style registers, one can posit that proprial articles naturally tend to become obligatory, i.e. strive towards more extensive uses, when not hampered in their growth by the influence of varieties with less extensive uses. This could clarify the observation made in Johannessen & Garbacz (2014) that proprial articles are simultaneously meant to be obligatory, and yet optional in many dialects. For this purpose, a study that could chart dialects with a proprial article whilst taking its extension into account would be able to test the hypothesis that dialects exempt from heterogenous influence strive towards an obligatory and extensive use of the article, as opposed to contact varieties.

## 6. On the origin and evolution of the proprial article

Having presented in fig. XIII a near-complete model of restriction hierarchies which describes languages from a synchronic perspective, the diachronic question of the origin and evolution of the proprial article still needs to be addressed.

Concerning its evolution, the claim that the restriction hierarchy is never systematically violated inside a single language variety implies that diachronic change must also respect the restriction hierarchy. The global use of the proprial article must therefore spread from central to peripheral uses progressively, without skipping a stage, and reduce itself in the same way, from peripheral to central uses.

Concerning its origin, I want to furnish here an explanation for possible grammaticalisation paths of the proprial article (see also Werth 2014: 165-173 for an analysis of this grammaticalisation according to syntactic and pragmatic functions).

As mentioned in the introduction and in Sigurðsson (2006: 219), “the proprial article [JK: is] a marker of familiarity or givenness”. Be it in the form of a definite article or of a personal pronoun, it originates as a marker of knownness in languages in which it is not yet established as an obligatory marker. Its appearance in a language should therefore take place as follows:

(12)

- a) Initially, definite articles and personal pronouns mark knownness towards the entity referred to inside the discourse. They refer to an individual who was previously mentioned and/or whose identity is clear to both interlocutors, functioning as markers of *grammatical* knownness.
- b) They get reinterpreted as markers of *social* knownness, whilst their use expands from pure grammar to the pragmatic and social domains. This originates in the tendency to distinguish morphosyntactically between known individuals and strangers (compare e.g. nicknames). Family words used as proper names for family members first contrast with family words used as common nouns (see next paragraph). Subsequently, the first names of family members and friends are distinguished from the first names of other individuals.
- c) This “closeness-marking” gets extended so far as to get reinterpreted as a rule whereby individuals automatically get a proprial article, be it close or distant persons. This happens

by progressively extending the scope from near individuals to e.g. the pastor and the mayor of the town, local celebrities, all celebrities and fictional characters, then sacred figures.

- d) As a consequence of this expansion, the proprial article loses its “affective” connotation and its function as a knownness marker, and becomes an obligatory marker used with nearly any animate being.

As the model of restriction hierarchies in fig. XIII shows, the first step towards the extension of the proprial article is its use with family words, which have the crucial particularity that they can function as common nouns and as proper names. Contrarily to e.g. first names, their use with definite articles is well-established in languages without proprial articles. Compare the following English sentence:

- (13) Sara and her family are very kind and friendly. The father is relatively calm, and the mother rather dynamic.

Such contexts in which family words are unambiguously used as common nouns can coexist with contexts in which it is rather ambiguous if they still are common nouns or already used as proper names, as illustrated by these French lyrics from Jacques Brel (*Jef; Ces gens-là*):

- (14)
- a) Viens! Il me reste trois sous, on va aller se les boire chez la mère Françoise.  
Come! I’ve got three pennies left, let’s drink them away at *the* mother Françoise’s tavern.
- b) Et dans son cadre en bois, il y a la moustache du père, qui est mort d’une glissade, et qui regarde son troupeau bouffer la soupe froide.  
And in his wooden frame, there is the moustache of *the* father, who died of a slide, and is watching his flock [JK: pejorative for “children”] eat the cold soup.

In the first example, it is not obvious at all if *mother* is a pure common noun, or is fully part of her (colloquial) name. In the second example, *the father* can either mean “the father of the children”, or be understood as a proper name with *the* as a proprial article used by his family members, something which frequently occurs in Brel’s songs (compare *l’Émile, la Denise*). The border between family words as common nouns and as proper names is often blurred to such an extent that it is not surprising to find constructions of “definite article + family word” reanalysed as a proprial article construction. Such constructions are thus a fertile pathway for definite articles to be grammaticalised as proprial articles.

The grammaticalisation of the personal pronoun as a proprial article, on the other hand, is likely to originate in the tendency, in colloquial speech, to topicalise noun phrases and replace them with a personal pronoun:

- (15) Men Far, han er ikkje komen.  
But Dad, he did not come.

Further topicalisation of the personal pronoun can followingly lead to this construction:

- (16) Men han, Far, han er ikkje komen.  
But he, Dad, he did not come.

Similar topicalisation phenomena are generally attested for the SOV to SVO word order shift in all Germanic languages (Gerritsen 1984: 118), whereby topics and especially subjects are frequently shifted towards the beginning of the utterance, similarly to (16). This leaves the door open for the reanalysis of a topicalised third person pronoun as a proprial article.

## 7. Summary

By comparing the restrictions which determine the use of the proprial article in Germanic languages, this paper has shed light on a recurrent and regular pattern common to all varieties. This pattern reveals how human beings, by means of the proprial article, categorise other human beings on a scale of “social closeness,” and express proximity or distance towards individuals.

To test the universality of the restriction hierarchy of the proprial article, further studies could compare its use in other, non-Germanic languages. For instance, many Romance varieties (e.g. French and Italian dialects and/or regiolects, Catalan, European Portuguese) allow the use of a definite article with a personal name (see (1) in the appendix). In the Slavic language family, some Czech dialects are reported to use proprial articles in the form of personal pronouns, exactly as in Scandinavia (“ona Vera ‘she Vera’”, in van Langendonck 2007: 158).

Based on the results presented in this paper, one can conclude that the deeper logical structure which lies behind different restrictions of the use of the proprial article reflects an essential and universal property of human thought and, consequently, of human language: a highly anthropocentric view and the subsequent mental categorisation of living things according to this perspective. Exactly as humans order lexical entities into categories with prototypical (central) and peripheral elements (compare for example Prototype Theory), humans classify humans from their own perspective using the proprial article. Therefore, the proprial article fits in the larger frame of the grammatical structures which reflect human perception and social structure.

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*Joachim Kokkelmans*

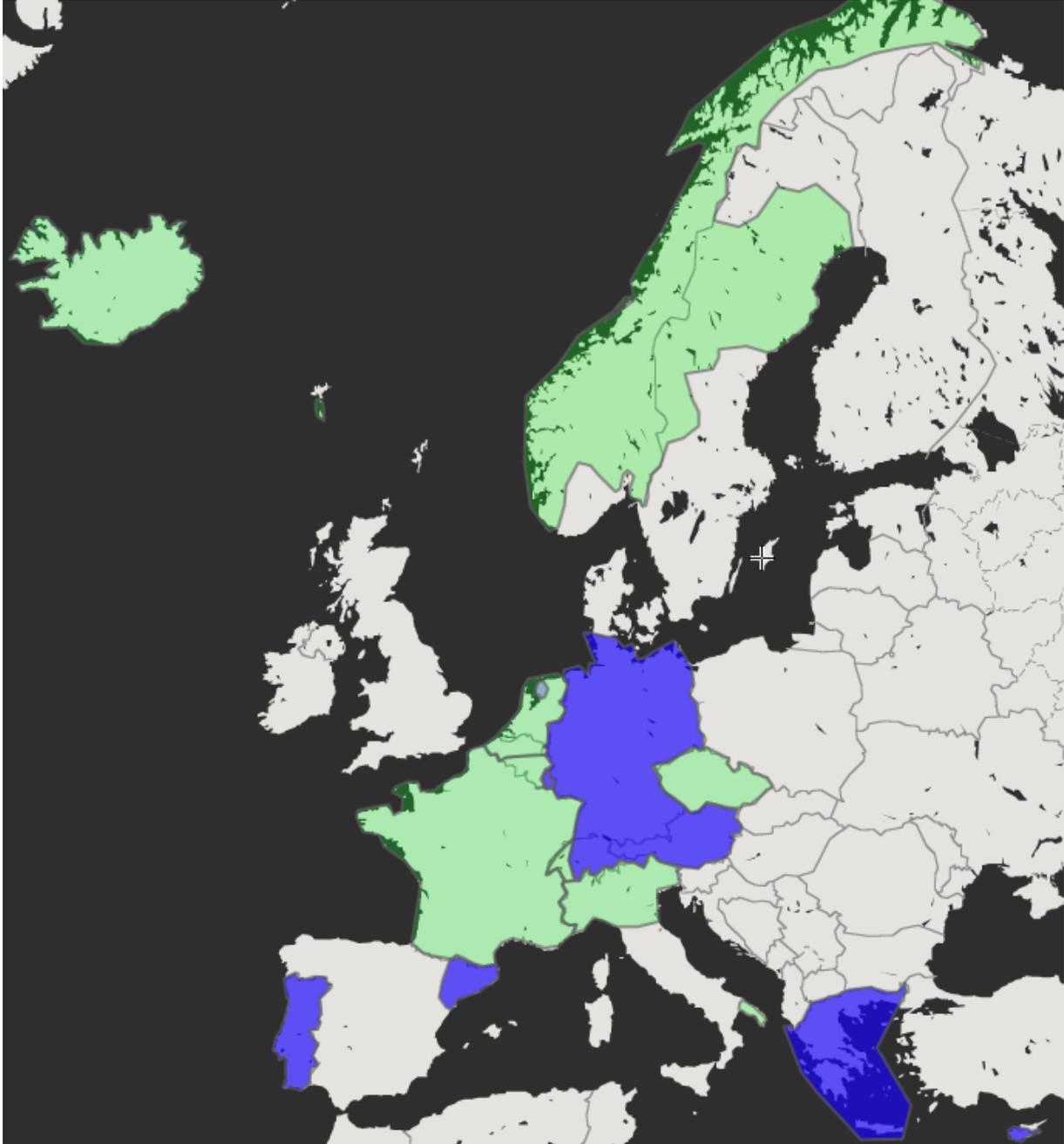
*Ghent University / Università degli Studi di Verona*

*joachimkokkelmans@gmail.com*

## Appendix

This section contains additional material to represent the spread of the proprial article in Europe, followed by the examples used in the tables in section 4.

1a)

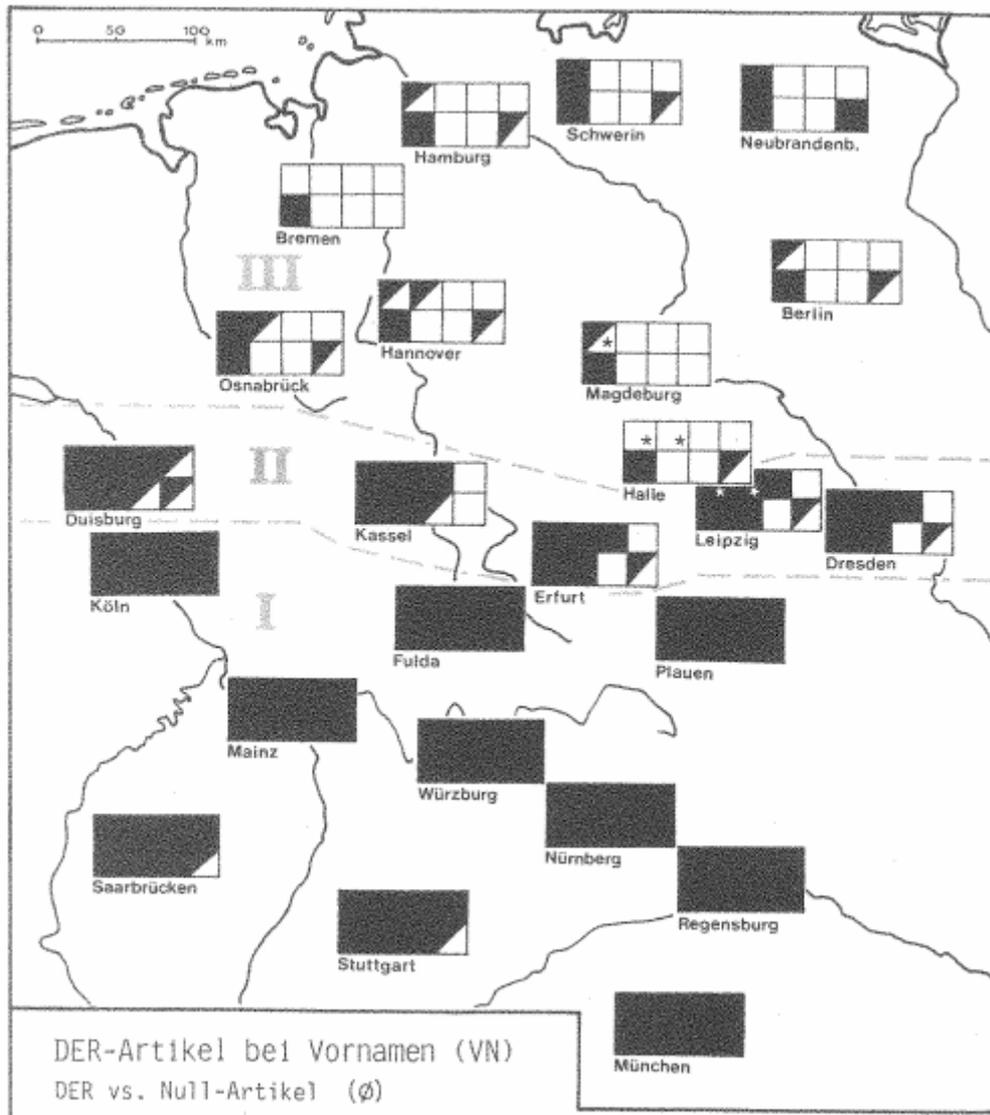


Non-exhaustive map of European languages which have proprial articles (created using Scribble Maps). Blue indicates standard languages with proprial articles, green indicates dialects and/or regiolects but no standard languages with proprial articles.

1b) Non-exhaustive list of European languages with proprial articles (Håberg 2010: 6f.; Delsing 2003: 12-16; Matushansky 2006: 285, 303, 579-582; van Langendonck 2007: 158; Viviani 2011; own data):

- Greek (Ancient and Modern)
- Catalan
- French speaking dialects and regiolects (Belgium, France and Switzerland)
- Italian dialects and regiolects (Northern Italy and Salento)
- European Portuguese
- Icelandic dialects (informal)
- Faroese (informal)
- Norwegian dialects
- Swedish dialects
- German speaking dialects and regiolects (Austria, Germany and Switzerland)
- Luxemburgish dialects and standard language
- Dutch speaking dialects and regiolects (Belgium, the Netherlands)
- Frisian (Germany, the Netherlands)
- Czech

2)



Map of the use of the proprial article in German according to different contexts, with the three zones corresponding roughly to Upper, Middle and Low German, in Bellmann (1990: 274).

3)

## Standard oder Dialekt?

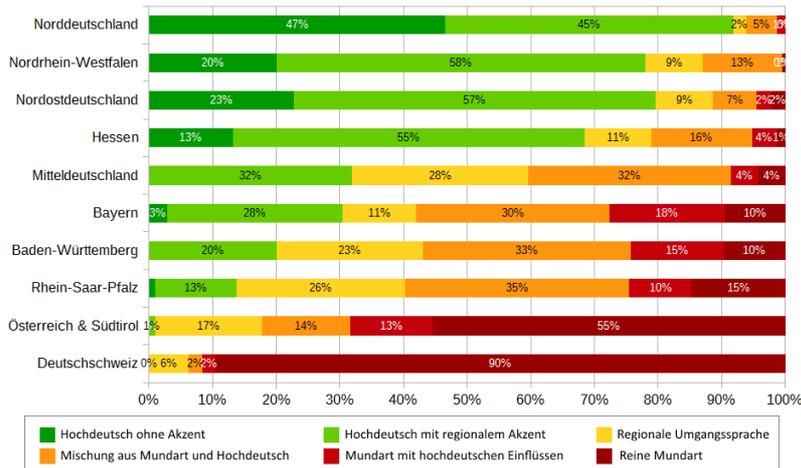
In einer aktuell noch laufenden Umfrage zum regionalen Sprachgebrauch wurde zusätzlich zu den Bezeichnungen für diverse Getränke auch folgende Frage gestellt:

"Was ist die normale Umgangssprache in Ihrem Ort?"

Zum 26. Dezember 2014 konnten 1136 Antworten aus dem gesamten deutschen Sprachgebiet berücksichtigt werden, welche in 10 Regionen eingeteilt wurden:

Die Ergebnisse zeigen klare nationale Unterschiede: In der Schweiz, Österreich und Italien dominiert der Gebrauch der Mundarten, in Deutschland dagegen Standarddeutsch oder Mischformen zwischen Standarddeutsch und Mundart.

Auch innerhalb Deutschlands gibt es klare regionale Unterschiede: Von Süden nach Norden nimmt der Gebrauch der Standardsprache immer mehr zu und der Gebrauch der Mundarten immer mehr ab. Auffällig ist Mitteldeutschland, was zwar wenige Meldungen für Mundart, aber auch keine Meldungen für "Hochdeutsch ohne Akzent" aufweist.



<http://kristianmitk.wordpress.com>

Map of dialect/standard language use and fluency in German speaking countries. Source: kristianmitk.wordpress.com.

### Examples

– Table IV

	a personally known individual	the mayor of this town	a celebrity born and raised in this region	distant celebrities, e.g. Elvis Presley
<i>roemskog_02uk</i>	han M2 <sup>14</sup>	-	-	Max Manus
<i>oppdal_10</i>	han M2, han stefaren min	-	Ole Gunnar Solskjær	-
<i>oppdal_31</i>	han M3 og han M4	han ordføreren vår	Erik Håker, Håkon Mjøen, Ola Mæle	-
<i>voss_03gm</i>	han M1, hun F1	-	han Johan Fjellby, han Ivar	Elvis Presley

<sup>14</sup> In the ScanDiaSyn corpus, names of individuals (but not celebrities) are anonymised. "M2" stands e.g. for "man no. 2".

			Knipo Kvåle, han Arne Hjeltnes	
<i>oppdal_03gm</i>	han M3	-	han Johan Schönheyder, han Erik Håker	-
<i>kvaefjord_01um</i>	han M1, hun F2	-	-	han Hulken, han Aragorn, han Frodo, hon Lara Croft

Sources: ScanDiaSyn, Håberg (2010).

– Table V

	personally known	near celebrity	distant celebrities and fictional characters	
			distant celebrity	fictional character
Oppdal (elder informants)	han M3 og han M4	han ordføreren vår, han Erik Håker, Erik Håker, Håkon Mjøen, Ola Mæle, han Erik Schöneheyder, han Trulsen		-
Icelandic	hún María	hún Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, hann Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson	-	-
Voss	han M1, hun F1	han Johan Fjellby, han Ivar Knipo Kvåle, han Arne Hjeltnes	(han) Elvis Presley	-
Gausdal	hun F2	han Elvis Presley		-
Kvæfjord	han M1, hun F2	-	han Hulken, han Aragorn, han Frodo, hon Lara Croft	han Hulken, han Aragorn, han Frodo, hon Lara Croft

Sources: ScanDiaSyn, Sigurðsson (2006).

– Table VI

	personally known	near celebrity	distant celebrities and fictional characters	
			distant celebrity	fictional character
ZW--_E_00260 (Northern Alemannic, DGD)	-	der Karl May, die Annemirl Bucher	Hitler	-
Beveren	de Lisa, de Sebastiaan	den Filip (Belgian king), de Mathilde (Belgian queen), den Elvis (Presley)	Vlad Țepeș, Seneca, Manfred von Richthofen	Yoda, Luke Skywalker
Cologne	dä Bäätes	dä Lukas Podolski (dä Poldi), dä Hennes <sup>15</sup> , vum Fritz Hönig, der Willi Ostermann, der Karl Berbuer	Obama, dä Obama	-
Luxemburgish	de Jean	de Xavier Bettel	d'Angela Merkel	den Darth Vader
Eys	der Joachim	der André Rieu	der Julius Caesar	der Faust

Sources: own data, vdl.lu: 13, RTL.lu: 18.08.2017, Wikipedia, Herrwegen (2017: 23), Kölsch-Akademie (Kölsche Liedersammlung).

– Table VII

	personally known	celebrities and fictional characters	secondary sacred figures	God
Ål (Buskerud)	han M1, hun F2	han Bjarne Håkon Hanssen, han Harald Hårfagre	-	Gud
Målselv (Troms)	hun F1, hun F2	-	hun sankta Maria	-

Source: ScanDiaSyn.

<sup>15</sup> Mascot of the local football team F.C. Köln (a he-goat).

– Table VIII

	personally known	celebrities and fictional characters	secondary sacred figures	God
Beveren	de Sebastiaan	den Filip (Belgian king), Vlad Țepeș	Maria, Jezus	God
Cologne	dä Bäätes	der Poldi, (dä) Obama, vum Franz Schubert	Et Elisabeth, mem Johannes, dä Jesus, (de) Maria	Jott
ZW--_E_01748 (Southwestern German, DGD)	der Jub, der Matz, der Kosmitzki, der Nammich	der Kajaphas	Jesus <sup>16</sup>	-
Luxemburgish	de Jean	de Xavier Bettel	de Paulus, de Jesus	Gott
Eys	et Marie	et Marie Curie	der Jezus, de Maria <sup>17</sup>	der God

Sources: DGD, Wikipedia (Jesus Christus, Ave Maria), evangelium.lu, vdl.lu: 13, own data.

– Table IX

	family word	first name	first name + last name	last name
Icelandic	hann faðir minn	hún María	??hann Jón Sigurðsson	-
Toten	han far	han M1	-	X
Voss	hun mor, han far	hun F3, han M1	-	-
Gausdal	han far	han M1, han M2	-	-
Lom og Sjøk	V	V	V	X
Kvæfjord	hun mor	han M1, hun F2	han M34, han Harry Potter	han E1

Sources: Håberg (2010), ScanDiaSyn, Sigurðsson (2006).

<sup>16</sup> Two occurrences of “*Jesus*” and one of “*der Jesus*” are found, the latter being yet explained by the context: the informant is speaking in a humorous anecdote of a young boy playing Jesus in a role play, and refers by using *the Jesus* to the boy and not to the sacred figure. When referring to the “true” and “sacred” Jesus, the informant uses no article.

<sup>17</sup> Anecdotically, one can observe that Mary, the mother of Jesus, has a feminine article in Eys contrarily to all other women, who have neuter definite articles.

– Table X

	family word	first name	first name + last name	last name
ZW--_E_02861 (Hattingen, Nordrhein-W., DGD)	zur Mutter, der Vater, die Mutter	Oswald	_18	-
ZW--_E_05826 (Herford, Nordrhein-W., DGD)	der Vater	Hans, Guste	Heinrich Franzmeier	Franzmeier
ZW--_E_05655 (Enger, Nordrhein- W., DGD)	der Vater, die Mutter, dem Onkel, der Opa	Laura, Ida, Paul, Wilhelm, Heinrich, Guste	Hermann Meier, Wilhelm Stuke	Pauck, Puhlmann, Heckewert, Köcker, Brunning etc.
		-	den August Gröppel, vom Heinrich Gröppel	
Luxemburgish	d'Mamm, de Papp	de Jean	d'Angela Merkel	d'Merkel
Eys	der Papp	der Jo	der André Rieu	der Rieu

Sources: DGD, RTL.lu: 18.08.2017, vdl.lu: 13, RTL.lu: 12.09.2017, own data.

<sup>18</sup> In the transcript, one occurrence of “*den Wilhelm Hein*” with article is present, but one cannot hear any article when playing the audio part, something which is perhaps a transcription error.