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Sustainable Development in a Diverse World (SUS.DIV)

RESEARCH PAPER OF RESEARCH TASK 1.2

“Cultural diversity as an asset for human welfare and development”

**Mapping regional minority languages in Europe.
Basque in Spain**

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Basque Country covers an area of approximately 20,742 square kilometres along the Bay of Biscay, north and south of the Pyrenees and comprises seven provinces. Three of these provinces belong to the French department 'Pyrénées Atlantiques' (Lapurdi, Nafarroa Beherea and Zuberoa), and four to two autonomous regions in Spain (the Basque Autonomous Community and Navarre). Both the Basque Autonomous Community and Navarre are among the economically most dynamic autonomous communities in Spain. This paper will only focus on the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) where approximately two million of the almost three million inhabitants of the Basque Country live.

Even though the Basques were probably living in the Basque Country since Palaeolithic times, the oldest historical records are linked to the Romanization of the Iberian Peninsula in the second and first centuries BC. The Basque language was widely spoken all over the Basque Country for many centuries but it was not used officially or in writing and only isolated sentences and names can be found in documents written in Navarrese Romance, Occitan and Latin (see also Zuazo, 1995). The first book in Basque 'Lingua Vasconum Primitiae' by Bernard Etxepare was not published until 1545.

The Basque language has been in contact with Latin and Romance languages for centuries and it has been influenced by them mainly at the phonological and lexical levels. For example, intensive contact with its powerful neighbours, Spanish and French, explains the important influence of these languages on the Basque phonological system. The influence of Latin and Romance languages is also very important and words from Romance languages have entered the Basque language through the centuries. This contact with Romance languages explains the important retreat suffered by Basque in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The contact has increased in the twentieth century as the result of industrialization and the development of communications and the mass media. The Basque provinces of Gipuzkoa and Bizkaia fought against Franco during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and many Basques had to be exiled in different countries in Europe and America. Speaking Basque was illegal during Franco's dictatorship (1939-1975). The 'Spanish only' policy during the dictatorship had important consequences not only at the institutional and educational levels but also in the private domain.

Another factor that had a very important influence on the decrease of Basque in the 20th century was immigration. The industrialization of the BAC and Navarre attracted an important number of Spanish speaking immigrants in the 50's, 60's and 70's. It is estimated (Azurmendi & Martínez de Luna 2006: 15) that 'about one third of the current population in the BAC is the result of this immigration'. These immigrants remained in most cases monolingual in Spanish as they did not have problems to communicate with Basque-Spanish bilingual speakers. Learning Basque is more difficult than learning other languages such as Catalan or Galician because Basque is not an Indo-European language and its morphology and syntax are completely different from Spanish. In contrast to Spanish, Basque is a highly inflected language with sixteen morphological cases and typologically, it has been defined as ergative and agglutinative (Saltarelli, 1988, see also Cenoz in press for more linguistic characteristics).

The Spanish Constitution (1978) declared Spanish the nationwide official language and guaranteed the rights of Spanish speakers to use their language but also raised the possibility of recognizing other languages as co-official in their own territories. Nowadays, Basque has a co-official status in the BAC and the Northern area

of Navarre but not in the Northern Basque Country in France. The differences in legislation have important implications for the resources allocated to the development of Basque and therefore for its maintenance and revival. The use of Basque in education in the BAC can illustrate this point. When the bilingual models were established in 1982, approximately 25% of the students in the BAC attended Basque-medium schools; at present, 83% of kindergarten/primary schoolchildren and 65% of secondary schoolchildren have Basque as a language of instruction (see also Cenoz, 1998, 2001). This success promoting the minority language in the school context is not reflected in language use in society at large and the Basque language is still a language 'at risk'.

One of the main challenges is its use in different areas and the development of a standard because Basque has traditionally been used orally and had a very limited use at the institutional level. Apart from the poor writing tradition and the low social prestige of the language, the mountainous terrain of the Basque spreading North and South of the Pyrenees and the administrative division of the country can explain the existence of different Basque dialects. The Academy of the Basque Language (Euskaltzaindia), founded in 1918, has played a crucial role in the standardization of the Basque language at the oral and written levels. The Academy defined a unified standard variety of Basque called *euskara batua* (unified Basque) in the 60's. This variety is based on the central dialects of Lapurdi and Gipuzkoa and is nowadays the most widespread variety of Basque and it is generally used in official documents, educational materials, in the teaching of Basque as a second language, the mass media (Basque television, radios and newspapers) and in literature.

Another challenge for the survival of Basque is the use of Basque. Proficiency in the language has increased but many Basque speakers have Spanish as their first language and they feel more comfortable using Spanish than Basque. Moreover, the communicative need to use Basque is low because Basque speakers are also proficient in Spanish and the linguistic distance between Basque and Spanish makes it necessary to switch into Spanish when just one person in a group conversation does not speak Basque. There are important geographical differences in the use of Basque and it is possible to use Basque most of the time in some small towns and villages (mainly in Gipuzkoa) but switching into Spanish is necessary in many situations in the majority of the cities and towns of the Basque Country.

Apart from promoting the learning and use of Basque in education, there are special plans to promote the Basque language in other sectors. The Basque Government has created specific institutions such as HAKE, for the teaching of Basque to adults or IVAP, the Basque institute of public administration and has funded a large number of institutions and projects to promote the Basque language. An important effort has also been made by public and private institutions to promote the use of Basque in the media. Nowadays, there are several all-Basque radio stations and others with programs in Basque. The Basque Government (BAC) finances two television channels, one in Basque and one in Spanish and there is a Basque newspaper. Other newspapers devote a few pages a week to articles in Basque and there are some magazines and an increasing number of professionally specialized journals written in Basque but with a small circulation. In spite of all these efforts, the use of Basque in daily life and in the mass media is overshadowed by the dominant role of Spanish.

The survival of Basque is also challenged by the new wave of immigration that has arrived in the last five or six years. These new immigrants do not come from Spain but from other countries, mainly South America (Colombia, Ecuador, Argentina), Morocco, Rumania or China. The educational data indicate that the number of immigrant students in schools in the BAC was approximately 2,000 between 1995 and

2000 but had raised to 13,875 by the academic year 2004-2005. This is 4.5% of the total number of primary and secondary students. In contrast to pupils born in the Basque Country (including second and third generation Spanish immigrants), most of these immigrant students do not study through the medium of Basque and only have the minimum compulsory number of hours of Basque. Basque classes are also offered to adult immigrants but only a limited number of adults attend them. It is difficult to predict what the impact of immigration will be on the survival of the Basque language but some sectors of the populations are seriously worried about it. In contrast to immigrant languages, Basque is a minority language in its own community, that is, in the only community where it is spoken. Being a minority language it faces many challenges which can affect its survival.

2. RATIONALE AND GOALS OF RESEARCH

Research on the situation of Basque in the BAC has focused on different areas. The attempts to reverse language shift after many years of repression have been supported by a strong official language policy. The social movements to promote the knowledge and use of Basque are also very dynamic in the BAC and there is a large number of associations working on different areas (Mendiguren & Iñigo, 2006). These efforts have had an impact on the vitality of Basque and have triggered research in different areas such as i) The general knowledge and use of Basque, ii) The outcomes bilingual education; iii) Attitudes; iv) The visibility of the Basque language.

i. The general knowledge and use of Basque

One of the main aims of research on the Basque language in the last 20 years has been to provide an accurate picture of the linguistic situation, that is, to get to know the total number of speakers of Basque, their distribution and the use of the language. Information about the knowledge of Basque by the general population is useful for different reasons. It can provide the necessary information to compare the different geographical territories where the Basque language is spoken and it can also provide information for sociolinguistic studies involving variables such as gender, age or size of the municipality. It can also be useful to see the effect of language policy and to forecast the future of the Basque language.

Studies on language use have focused on the use of Basque in the individual's social networks including the family (mother, father, husband-wife, son-daughter, home), the local community (among friends, in shops, with colleagues, in the market and with the priest) and other societal domains: in the bank in the town hall with the children's school teachers and in the health services. So far, three sociolinguistic surveys (1991, 1996, 2001) have been conducted by the Basque Government Department of Culture (Eusko Jaurlaritza, 1995, 1997, 2003)

One of the main challenges of the Basque language is its use in everyday life. In order to examine to what extent the Basque language is used four studies (1989, 1993, 1997, 2001) have focused on street measurements of Basque use. These studies provide a picture of the use of Basque on a specific day all over the BAC (Altuna, 2002a). This information is very interesting to see the way the gap between knowledge of Basque and use of Basque is evolving.

ii. The outcomes of bilingual education

Research in education has focused on the outcomes of bilingual education. The use of Basque as a language of instruction is well established now in kindergarten, primary and secondary education but it has presented many challenges to use a minority language as the language of instruction. One of the main problems has been the lack of teachers with enough proficiency in Basque. There have been in-service courses for many teachers and nowadays 75.8% of the teachers in public schools is proficient in Basque. Other challenges include the development of teaching materials in Basque and the increasing number of students with Spanish as the first language who attend Basque-medium instruction.

One of the main goals of research on the outcomes of bilingual education has been the measurement of proficiency in Basque and Spanish taking into account the number of hours devoted to each language in each of the models of bilingual education. As using Basque as the language of instruction faces many challenges, another area of interest has been to analyse the outcomes of teaching through the medium of Basque on achievement in other areas of the curriculum such as mathematics or science. Research on the outcomes of bilingual education has resulted in a number of Ph.D theses and other research studies but also in reports commissioned by the Basque Government or municipalities. Most of the research has been published locally, mainly in Basque but there are also some publications in English (Cenoz, 1998; Arzamendi & Genesee, 1997; Lasagabaster, 2001a; Cenoz, forthcoming).

Apart from Basque and Spanish, English is becoming increasingly important for Basque citizens as a medium of intraEuropean and international communication. As in many other areas in Europe (Cenoz & Jessner, 2000), English is considered a third language but in the case of the Basque Country, it is also a foreign language not used in everyday communication. Nowadays most school children start learning English at the age of four, in kindergarten. One of the most important issues in research on the acquisition of English is that which focuses on the effect of bilingualism in Basque and Spanish on English proficiency (Cenoz & Valencia, 1994; Lasagabaster, 2000; Sagasta, 2003). Research in this area aims at analysing whether bilingualism has an additive effect on the acquisition of an additional language as related to the advantages associated with bilingualism such as the development of metalinguistic awareness or some specific strategies.

Another issue is related to the effect of the early introduction of a foreign language in school contexts. Most studies conducted in natural contexts where learners are exposed to the target language through interaction with native speakers confirm the 'earlier the better' hypothesis. In these studies (see Singleton & Ryan, 2004 for a review) ultimate achievement in the target language is related with age of arrival to the host country. This finding is not confirmed in formal settings in which the target language is only one of the subjects in the curriculum. Research conducted in the BAC in this area compares the acquisition of English by children who have started to learn English at different ages. Research on English in bilingual education has resulted in a number of Ph.D. theses and research articles published locally and internationally (for a review see Cenoz, forthcoming).

iii. Attitudes

There are a number of studies on attitudes which have focused on different dimensions. Some studies have measured the attitudes of the general population towards Basque, the Basque Government linguistic policy or the use of two languages in the community. Others have focused the factors affecting attitudes and their relationship with academic achievement in educational contexts. Some other studies take into consideration the increasing influence of English and examine attitudes towards three languages (Basque, Spanish and English). The study of attitudes can be very informative so as to know the way the Basque population in general or students react towards the acquisition and use of the different languages in a community in which linguistic diversity is becoming more important and where the Basque language has a symbolic value as a marker of identity.

The Basque Government has included questions about attitudes in the sociolinguistic surveys. The section of the survey on attitudes focuses on the attitudes towards the Government's language policy and includes questions about assessment of policy to promote the use of Basque, and assessment of the language policy in education and the public sector. These questions give direct feedback to the Government about their general language policy to promote Basque.

Apart from the surveys conducted by the Basque Government other researchers have carried out research studies on other dimensions of attitudes. It is not possible to include all the research studies conducted on attitudes in this paper and we are focusing on the ones that deal with three languages because they are more representative of linguistic diversity. The studies on attitudes towards Basque, Spanish and English have been conducted in educational contexts.

Cenoz (2002) and Lasagabaster (2001b, 2003) analysed attitudes towards learning Basque, Spanish and English and also attitudes towards multilingualism. The first part of their questionnaires is based on Gardner's attitude battery (1985) and looks at the attitudes towards the three languages separately (for example '*I would like to learn as much Basque as possible*' or '*Learning English is very useful to find a job*'). The second part focuses on the three languages together (for example '*It is important to be able to speak Basque, Spanish and English*') and it is based on Baker (1992). Cenoz conducted her study in primary and secondary school and Lasagabaster at the university. Analysing attitudes towards these three languages and multilingualism can give useful information about educational contexts in which several languages are part of the curriculum.

iv. The visibility of the Basque language

Another approach to the study of the use of Basque and other languages is to examine the use of different languages in the linguistic landscape (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006, Gorter & Cenoz, forthcoming). These studies have focused on the use of Basque, Spanish and English in public and private language signs in different streets. A different way to study the linguistic landscape has been to use questionnaires and to conduct interviews on the way the use of the different languages in language signs is perceived (Gorter & Cenoz, 2004). The study of the linguistic landscape provides a very important measure of the visibility of the language and the effect of language policy.

3. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION, DATA PROCESSING AND DATA ANALYSIS

Research conducted on Basque has used different methods, different data collection procedures and different analyses. Some studies can be defined as more ‘institutional’ and they tend to provide a description of the situation focusing mainly on the knowledge of Basque or on school achievement. Other studies have been conducted by researchers who have a theoretical model, a theoretical proposal or the results of research on a specific topic conducted in other contexts as a starting point and try to see if their hypotheses can be confirmed in the Basque context. These studies are usually conducted by researchers and Ph.D candidates at the university. They usually go beyond the description of the data and in the case of quantitative studies analyse the effect of some variables on the dependent variable. In this section we will look at the methodology used in the four areas already considered.

i) The general knowledge and use of Basque

We can make a distinction between the sociolinguistic surveys conducted by the Basque Government and the ‘Street measurement of Basque use’ conducted by the associations EKB and Sei Elkarte.

The sociolinguistic surveys on the knowledge and use of Basque by the general population look at the following variables: language proficiency, language use in the family, language use at work and in formal contexts, transmission in the family and attitudes towards language policy.

The three surveys had been carried out every five years (1991, 1996, 2001). The data were collected via home interviews using a questionnaire. The sample for the most recent survey was 3600 participants who were over 15 years of age. The results were projected to the total population of the BAC taking into account the 1996 census and the annual reviews of these data. The results are analysed according to the geographical distribution in the three provinces, age, gender, type of activity/job and language.

The Basque Government Department of Culture has also published sociolinguistic maps of the Basque Autonomous Community based on census and survey data. In these maps, the distribution of the Basque speaking population in all the cities, towns and villages of the Basque Country is presented visually.

The ‘Street Measurement of Basque use’ studies use a completely different methodology which is quite original in sociolinguistic studies and we are going to discuss in more detail. The methodology of this research consists of direct observation of people speaking on the street. The aim is to record the language used by speakers on the street without asking them any questions. Therefore, the data collection is carried out in a completely natural environment and the researcher’s presence is hardly noticed by the speakers who do not know that they are providing data for a research study. This methodology has the advantage of not reflecting subjective data reported in questionnaires where subjects may decide to express their wishes or what they think it is correct or expected instead of their real linguistic behaviour. In the case of street measurement, the researcher only has to listen to the language spoken and then records the results. As Altuna (2002a) says, this instrument was used after reflecting on the limitations that surveys have. One of the limitations of surveys is the subjectivity of the data and the other is that in situations such as that of Basque the knowledge of the language is not enough for a diagnosis. ‘The street measurement of Basque use’ does not have these limitations but can give very limited information as it is based on the

observation of the language spoken. It shows the number of people who use Basque on a specific date and time in a specific place and not the intention or decision to speak Basque.

Even though it is not measured in most cases the conversations on the street are between members of the family, friends or other people and the topics are related to everyday life. In this sense it is the real use of the language in a natural setting. Altuna (2002a) points out that another advantage of this method is that the street is considered to be a neutral space, it has people with different levels of competence, different habits using the language and different ideas. The measurement is made in open places, in streets with lots of people, parks and playgrounds. Close places (houses, bars, public offices or schools) are left out.

The research assistants choose to collect data in one or more streets depending on the size of the town. If the town has less than 15,000 inhabitants then they do one round of the selected area and they do an extra round for every 10,000 inhabitants more. In most cases, the conversation is in one language the moment they are overheard but if the conversation includes a few words in another language only the main language is considered. All those participating in the conversation are considered measured even if they are not talking at the time the research assistants are observing. For example, if there are three people talking and the research assistant who is passing by hears that one of them is using Basque, the three are recorded as Basque users. Approximately 750 research assistants collect data at the same time and on the same two days in which the data collection takes place all over the Basque Country.

There have been four studies of street measurements (1989, 1993, 1997, 2001) and altogether over one million people have been observed. The observations have always taken place in the same month, in November and everytime on two days, a weekday and a Saturday. In addition to recording the language of each speaker the surveys have looked at other variables. The following variables have been included in the last two surveys: age, gender, presence of children and size of the group. The following table shows the number of people, towns and variables included in the four studies.

Table 1. Street measurement of Basque use

	1989	1993	1997	2001
Number of people observed	329,860	275,335	254,914	241,708
Number of towns	47	112	160	173
Size of towns	+10,000 (all)	+5,000 (all) +some smaller	+5,000 (all) + some smaller	+5,000 (all) Some smaller
Variables	Age	Age Group size	Age Group size Gender Children	Age Group size Gender Children

Source: Altuna 2002a

The 'Street measurement of Basque use' studies distinguish four age groups: children (0-14 years old), young people (15-24 years old), adults (25-64 years old) and older people (65+ years old). As the research assistants do not interact with the subjects they estimate which category they belong to. They also look at the size of the group speaking on the streets, the gender and they note down if children are involved in the

conversation, that is if it is a parent telling something to a child or a child talking to an adult or other children. These situations are distinguished from that of a group of adults having a conversation when a child is also present. The idea of looking at children comes from the assumption that Basque is spoken more in the presence of children or to address them. It is common for a couple to speak Spanish between them but Basque to their children even if the parents first language is Spanish.

The strong points of street measurement are the size of the sample including thousands of speakers and the fact that it is based on direct observation. The results of street measurement studies are useful to be related to the surveys so as to give a better picture of the sociolinguistic situation of the BAC.

ii. The outcomes of bilingual education

Research on the outcomes of bilingual education typically compares proficiency in Basque and Spanish in the different educational models. These models have a different distribution of hours for Basque and Spanish and with either Basque or Spanish or both languages as languages of instruction. It also controls for other variables such as general intelligence, socioeconomic background, socioeducational background, sociolinguistic context, gender, language use, etc.

Most research in this area is quantitative and cross-sectional. Questionnaires and language tests are used to collect the data and statistical analyses are carried out so as to compare the different groups (Etxeberria, 1999). There are also some qualitative studies. Some of these analyse oral or written production adopting a discourse perspective (see for example Sainz, 2001; Goikoetxea, 2006).

Studies on the effect of bilingualism on the acquisition of English as a third language or on the influence of age on the acquisition of English as a third language also use questionnaires and proficiency tests and in some cases, they combine cross-sectional and longitudinal designs. These studies also control for other variables (motivation, language use, exposure to the language, etc) Some of these studies include a more detailed linguistic analysis and focus on cross-linguistic influence, on phonetics, vocabulary or syntax (García Mayo & García Lecumberri, 2003).

iii. Attitudes

Most studies on attitudes are based on questionnaires and interviews. The research methodology used in the section on attitudes in the sociolinguistic surveys conducted by the Basque Government is the same as in the other sections of the surveys. They include specific questions about attitudes towards language policy in the BAC as part of the home interview along with the rest of questions.

The studies on attitudes towards Basque, Spanish, English and multilingualism are based on written questionnaires filled in by students. Cenoz (2002) asked 81 participants to fill in the questionnaires along with other tests of English proficiency and a background questionnaire. The participants were 81 primary and secondary school students divided into three groups: 4th year of primary, 2nd year of secondary and 5th year of secondary. All the subjects were from the same school and they all had Basque as the language of instruction. They all studied Spanish and English as school subjects. Lasagabaster (2001b) collected data from 113 university students specializing in language studies and in his 2003 study he collected data from 1087 university students with different specializations. Both Cenoz (2002) and Lasagabaster (2001b, 2003) used

questionnaires to measure attitudes towards the three languages, attitudes towards multilingualism and to get background information about the knowledge and use of the different languages.

iv. The visibility of the Basque language

The studies of the linguistic landscapes use different methodological approaches (see Barni, 2006; Gorter & Cenoz, forthcoming). The direct measurement of languages signs on the streets is based on digital pictures of all the signs on the streets which are later analysed according to different categories such as public/private, number of languages on the sign, the languages on the sign, first language on the sign, etc (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006). Then the data are analysed using the SPSS program so as to obtain the different percentages on the use of the languages. This methodology has some problems related to the unit of analysis because either each individual sign or each establishment can be taken as the unit of analysis. In some cases it is also difficult to decide how to classify the name of the establishment. In spite of these problems the method can give an idea of the relative weight of the different languages in a given street or area.

The studies on the perception of the linguistic landscape use questionnaires and interviews where the idea is to ask the participants which languages are used in the linguistic landscape and which languages are used more than others (Gorter & Cenoz, 2004).

4. OUTCOMES

i) The general knowledge and use of Basque

According to the most recent sociolinguistic survey conducted by the Basque Government, (Eusko Jaurlaritza, 2003) 29.4% of the population in the BAC is bilingual (Basque-Spanish) , and 11.4% is passive bilingual, that is they can understand Basque but have limited production skills. Monolinguals in Spanish are 59.2% of the population. Therefore, Basque is a minority language within its own territory and with very few exceptions, speaking Basque equals being bilingual in Basque and Spanish. The following table we can see the percentages of speakers corresponding to the surveys conducted in 1991, 1996 and 2001.

Table 2. Competence in Basque in the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) (percentages)

	1991	1996	2001
Bilingual (Basque-Spanish)	24.1	27.7	29.4
Passive bilingual (Basque-Spanish)	8.5	15.8	11.4
Monolingual (Spanish)	67.4	56.5	59.2

Source: Eusko Jaurlaritza, 2003

The data indicate that there is an increase in the percentage of bilinguals but monolinguals in Spanish are still the majority of the population. According to the same survey, the proportion of people who are proficient in Basque has increased in the three BAC provinces and in 2001 there were 110,000 bilinguals more than in 1991, mainly

because of the educational system. The number of Basque speakers has raised from 419,200 to 530,900 since 1991. The main increase has taken place in the 16-24 age group that has gone up from 25% of Basque speakers in 1991 to 48% in 2001. The spectacular progress is not particularly noticeable within the context of the total population, owing to the drastic drop in birth rate.

Many of the new bilinguals are speakers of Basque as a second language who have learned Basque at school. In most cases second language users do not speak Basque at home but sometimes they speak Basque with their friends. Bilinguals in Basque and Spanish have been further divided into three categories 'Basque-dominant bilinguals' (28,2% of the bilinguals), 'balanced bilinguals' (26,8% of the bilinguals) and 'Spanish-dominant' bilinguals (45% of the bilinguals). It can be seen that almost half of the speakers of Basque find it easier to use Spanish and Basque and according to the survey data this percentage is increasing.

The survey data indicate that there is a slight increase in the use of Basque. The use changes according to the number of speakers in the individual's social networks, the sociolinguistic area and the age group. Family transmission is one of the most crucial aspects of reversing language shift (Fishman, 1991, Azurmendi et al., 2001) and it is still weak in the Basque context. According to the survey data, 76.1% have Spanish as the first language, 18.8% Basque and 5.1% both Basque and Spanish. When both parents speak Basque there has been clear progress in Basque language transmission and even in the cases in which only one parent can speak Basque. The degree of bilingualism reached according to the first language can be seen in table 3.

Table 3. Degree of bilingualism according to the subjects' L1 (percentages)

	Bilingual	Passive bilingual (limited Basque)	Monolingual (Spanish)
Basque L1	90.1	4.3	5.5
Basque + Spanish L1	69.5	19.1	5.5
Spanish L1	11.6	12.6	75.7

Source: Eusko Jaurlaritza, 2003

The data indicate that those with Basque as an L1 are more likely to become bilingual but a high percentage with Basque and Spanish as first languages are also bilingual. The data also indicate that in the case of Basque the language spoken at home does not predict in all cases the level of bilingualism as 11.6% of those with Spanish as an L1 become fully bilingual.

According to the survey the two main factors influencing the use of Basque are the density of Basque speakers in the social networks and the fluency in Basque and Spanish. The former is closely linked to the sociolinguistic area and the latter to being a speaker of Basque as a first language. Other factors such as age or the attitude towards supporting Basque have some influence on the use of Basque but they are not as important. Basque is still a language with a very limited number of speakers, the total number of active bilinguals who use more Basque than Spanish or as much Basque as Spanish is estimated to be 291,500, that is only 18.6% of the population of the BAC. There are also 251,600 bilinguals who speak Basque but less than Spanish, that is 16.9% of the population. The majority of the population 64.4% only use Spanish in all contexts.

The surveys also provide information about the distribution of the Basque-speaking population and show that there are important differences in the three provinces: Gipuzkoa has 48% of bilinguals (9.5% passive bilinguals), Bizkaia 22,4% of

bilinguals (12.6% passive bilinguals) and Alava only 13,4% of bilinguals (11,1% passive bilinguals).

‘The street measurement of Basque use’ studies (Altuna, 2002b) have reported a slight increase in the use of Basque in two of the three Basque provinces (Gipuzkoa and Bizkaia) but not in Araba. The general figure for the whole of the Basque Country (including Navarre and the North Basque Country in France) has increased from 10.8 in 1989 to 13.5 in 2001 (see table 4).

Table 4. Use of Basque on the streets (percentages)

	1989	1993	1997	2001
Gipuzkoa	23.3	25.5	29.2	29.9
Bizkaia	8.1	9.1	9.7	11.0
Araba	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.3
Basque Country	10.8	12	13	13.5

Source: Altuna 2002b

It has also been observed that the increase in the use of Basque has taken place mainly in towns between 25,000 and 100,000 inhabitants but that there has been a decrease in towns with less than 5,000 inhabitants. When the data on language use are compared to those on the knowledge of Basque it can be observed that the increase in the use of Basque has taken place in towns in which the number of speakers does not reach 50%. So the slight increase in the use of Basque has taken place in the towns with most Spanish speakers.

ii) The outcomes of bilingual education

A large number of studies have focused on the outcomes of bilingual programs; some have been conducted by the Basque Government Department of Education and others by university researchers (see Cenoz, forthcoming for a review). The evaluations have focused mainly on proficiency in Basque and Spanish and academic achievement.

Proficiency in Basque. The results of the studies indicate that there are significant differences in Basque proficiency when the three models are compared (Gabina et al., 1986; Sierra & Olaziregi, 1989, 1991; Sierra 1996). Students with Basque as the language of instruction are the ones with the highest proficiency in Basque followed by students who have both Basque and Spanish as the language of instruction. The lowest level of proficiency in Basque corresponds to students who have Spanish as the language of instruction and only study Basque as a subject for only a few hours a week.

Proficiency in Spanish. The results indicate that there are no significant differences related to the language of instruction (Gabina et al., 1986; Sierra & Olaziregi, 1989, 1991; Sierra, 1996). Even students who have Basque as the language of instruction and only study Spanish for only 4-5 hours a week achieve very high levels of proficiency in Spanish. It seems likely that since Spanish is the majority language in the BAC,

opportunities for extensive exposure to it outside school compensate for reduced exposure to it in school.

Academic Development. Evaluations of achievement in mathematics and the natural and social sciences indicate that so far there are no significant differences between students in different models (Aierbe et al., 1974, 1989; Sierra, 1996).

Research findings on the acquisition of English as a third language in the BAC indicate that the use of Basque as the language of instruction and higher levels of bilingualism are positively related with higher levels of proficiency in English (Cenoz & Valencia, 1994; Lasagabaster, 2000, Sagasta, 2003). These results could be explained as related to higher levels of metalinguistic awareness associated with bilingualism and more highly developed learning strategies associated with L3 acquisition (Cenoz & Genesee, 1998).

The studies on the age factor in the acquisition of a third language in the school context have compared English proficiency of schoolchildren who started to learn English at different ages, in kindergarten, in the 3rd and 6th year of primary school. In general terms the results indicate that an early introduction of English as a third language in the school context does not necessary imply higher proficiency in this language (García Mayo & García Lecumberri, 2003). The limited amount of exposure to English in the Basque educational context is a possible explanation for these results which have also been reported in Catalonia (Muñoz, 2006).

iii. Attitudes

The results of the attitudes section of the most recent sociolinguistic survey (2001) indicate that attitudes towards the Government's policy for the promotion of Basque have not changed as compared to previous surveys. In general terms the majority of the population in the BAC supports this policy. Tables 5 and 6 show percentages corresponding to the survey questions on the Government's policy to promote the use of Basque and the policy in education and the public sector. As it can be expected the most favourable attitudes towards the promotion of Basque can be found in those areas of the BAC with a higher percentage of Basque speakers.

Table 5. Support for the Government's promotion of the use of Basque (percentages)

	1991	1996	2001
Agree and completely agree	52.1	47.3	50.3
Indifferent	29.5	37.2	33.6
Against and completely against	18.3	15.4	16.1

Source: Eusko Jaurlaritza, 2003

Table 6. Basque Government policy in education and the public sector (percentages)

	Education	Public sector
Appropriate	63	52
Not enough to support Basque	8	11
Too much is done	5	7
Indifferent	24	30

Source: Eusko Jaurlaritza, 2003

The results of the attitude studies in which attitudes towards Basque, Spanish and English have been measured confirm that attitudes towards Basque and towards learning Basque are positive. Cenoz (2002) found that students had better attitudes towards Basque than Spanish and English. She also found that younger students had more positive attitudes towards the three languages than older students but that positive attitudes towards English did not imply better scores in the English tests. Lasagabaster (2001b) found that students with Basque as the first language had more positive attitudes towards Basque than other students but less positive attitudes towards English and multilingualism. Lasagabaster (2003) reported that the level of proficiency is closely associated with positive attitudes, mainly in the case of the minority language. He also found that the sociolinguistic context of the students has an influence on their attitudes.

iv. The visibility of the Basque language

The study of the linguistic landscape (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006) conducted on one of the main shopping streets in Donostia-San Sebastián shows that Basque on its own or in combination with other languages appeared in over 50% of the signs. Spanish is by far the most dominant language and it is in 82% of the signs. English is in 28% of the signs. There are also differences between official and private signs. More Basque is used in official signs but English is only used in private signs. Cenoz & Gorter (2006) conducted a comparison of these results to those of the main shopping street in the Frisian city of Ljouwert-Leeuwarden. They found that the positive effect of a strong language policy to protect the minority language in the case of Basque as compared to Frisian. While Basque appeared in over 50% of the signs Frisian only appeared in 5% of the signs even though the percentage of speakers who are fluent in Frisian is higher than those fluent in Basque.

In another study (Gorter & Cenoz, 2004) they found that speakers in the Basque Country have a stronger preference for bilingual/multilingual signs than speakers in Friesland.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Research conducted in the Basque Country on different aspects of the vitality of Basque indicate that the strong language policy to promote the Basque language in the Basque Autonomous Community has stopped the decrease of Basque but that its knowledge and use is quite limited in everyday life with the exception of education.

The situation of Basque is related to the specific context of the Basque language and it is the result of a large number of social, historical and economic factors. The fact that it is a language 'at risk' is related to its long contact with more powerful languages and the centralized Spanish and French policy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The most critical stage for the Basque language came after the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) during Franco's dictatorship (1939-1975). At the end of this period there were important political changes and strong social movements to support Basque. This

explains that nowadays Basque is one of the minority languages in Europe with very strong institutional and social support. This situation together with other linguistic, cultural and social factors make the situation of Basque different from that of other minority languages. However, research conducted in the Basque country can contribute to research on linguistic diversity in Europe and can also benefit from the research conducted in other European contexts with regional minority (RM) and immigrant languages (IM).

As Extra & Gorter (2001) say RM and IM have a lot in common because of their minority status which implies processes of language maintenance and language shift towards the majority. The interaction between researchers of these languages and the study of their research methodologies can certainly improve our knowledge of these processes. According to Extra & Gorter (2001) RM and IM also share their role as a marker for identity. This is certainly true in the case of Basque which is a salient marker of Basque identity but it is also true in the case of majority languages. For example, the important budget allocated by the European Union to interpretation for the ‘majority’ languages is an indication of this role, there is no agreement to use somebody else’s language as the language of communication.

There are some important differences between RM and IM which have to be taken into consideration when comparing different situations. One of them has to do with the definition and identification of population groups. Extra & Yağmur (2004:31) discuss four different criteria to identify different groups: nationality, birth country, self-categorization and home language. In the case of RM languages only the last two of these criteria could be considered but the main problem of applying these criteria is that, at least in the case of Basque, it would be very difficult to identify a population group. It is possible to give figures or percentages for self-categorization (feeling Basque, Spanish or both) or home language (Basque, Spanish or both) but the problem is the concept of population group. It is difficult to draw a clear line between the ‘Spanish’ group and the ‘Basque’ group because they are completely mixed in many situations. Let’s see the following examples:

Family A. A family with Basque-speaking grandparents, Spanish speaking parents and children who have learned Basque at school but do not use it with their Spanish speaking parents? They all have Basque names and some feel only Basque and others Basque and Spanish.

Family B. The two parents are Spanish-speaking and they use Spanish between them but are proficient in Basque and only use Basque with the children. The children have Basque as the language of instruction. They have Spanish names because the grandparents immigrated from Spain in the 60’s but they feel more Basque than Spanish.

It is certainly difficult to apply the concept of population groups to situations like these which are extremely common in the Basque Country and probably more common in the case of RM than in the case of IM.

Another important difference between RM and IM languages is the vitality of the language in its more general sense of being alive or ‘at risk’. Following the Unesco 2001 Declaration that compares cultural diversity to biodiversity, languages such as Basque, Frisian or Welsh are the rare species that need special measures to be protected,

as it is the case with the blue whale, the Tristan albatross or the Hibiscus Insularis. On the other hand, many of the IM such as Mandarin, Turkish or Arabic are spoken by millions of people and are not 'at risk'. These IM languages are minority languages which also contribute to the cultural diversity of Europe and should be protected but important differences in language policy and in the allocation of economic resources for the protection of the two types of languages can be expected.

The research methodology used in the Basque Country includes different measures and confirms what Barni (2006) discusses in her paper about the need for triangulation in order to get a more accurate picture of the situation. The combination of surveys with studies of language use on the street, studies on the outcomes of bilingual education, studies on the visibility of Basque and attitudes can contribute to get a better picture of the important changes that have taken place in the Basque Country and of its current sociolinguistic situation. Minority languages, both RM and IM are in a dynamic situation and face new challenges all the time. Basque research reflects one of the main challenges of Basque, the use of the language in everyday life and has developed an interesting research methodology to analyse this use. This 'street measurement of Basque' could also be adapted to other contexts. Another challenge for Basque is the impact of IM on the knowledge and use of Basque and this is another important point that can be discussed in different European contexts. It is certainly necessary to share the information from different RM and IM contexts and to develop methodologies for mapping and measuring diversity in the European context.

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