



BASQUE IN EDUCATION

IN THE BASQUE AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY

by

Nicholas Gardner

Department of Culture

Basque Government

Spain

n-gardner@ej-gv.es

Summary

Basque has been marginally present **in education** for well over a century but the Spanish constitution of 1978 and subsequent legislation have provided the opportunity for a remarkable expansion in the use of Basque in education, especially under the regional government of the Basque Autonomous Community (Spain). This expansion has aroused the interest of academics and minority language loyalists worldwide. As a result, since its inception at the beginning of the nineteen eighties, the Department of Education, Universities and Research of the Basque Government has received numerous requests for information on the implantation of Basque alongside Spanish in the local education system. This book gathers together the answers to the most common questions, at the same time setting them in the broader context of the ongoing language planning initiative for Basque, which can be traced as far back as the fifties.

This 70 page text is a partially updated version of the book of the same name published by the Basque Government in 2000. If you want a free copy of the original, send a request together with your name and postal address to huisseus2@ej-gv.es

A critical review of the book by Jasone Cenoz is available in the
International Journal of Bilingual Education & Bilingualism, 2001, vol. 4, 6, 420-422

The views expressed are those of the author and are not necessarily held by the Basque Government.

© Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoko Administrazioa
Hezkuntza, Unibertsitate eta Ikerketa Saila

Last revised: 12-08-2002

CONTENTS

0. [FOREWORD](#)
1. [A FEW BASIC CONCEPTS](#)
2. [LIFE AND DECLINE OF THE BASQUE LANGUAGE](#)
3. [REVERSING LANGUAGE SHIFT](#)
4. [EDUCATION \(I\): THE EARLY DAYS](#)
5. [EDUCATION \(II\): EVOLUTION TO THE PRESENT](#)
6. [EDUCATION \(III\): OTHER ASPECTS](#)
7. [FUTURE PROSPECTS](#)

APPENDIXES

1. [ENGLISH LANGUAGE BIBLIOGRAPHY](#)
2. [LEARNING BASQUE](#)
3. [USEFUL ADDRESSES](#)
4. [ENGLISH LANGUAGE PUBLICATIONS](#)

List of figures

- Figure 1: [Map of the Basque Country](#)
Figure 2: [Distribution of Basque speakers](#)
Figure 3: [Live births in the BAC](#)
Figure 4: [Total rolls](#)
Figure 5: [Percentage shares of primary and secondary pupils by school network](#)
Figure 6: [Distribution of students in education system in figures](#)
Figure 7: [Percentage distribution of students in education system, 1982-83](#)
Figure 8: [Percentage distribution of students in education system, 1998-99](#)
Figure 9: [Distribution of students aged 3-14 in figures](#)
Figure 10: [Percentage distribution of students in primary education, 1982-83](#)
Figure 11: [Percentage distribution of students aged 3-14, 1998-99](#)

List of tables

- Table 1: [Summary of territorial organisation and names](#)
Table 2: [Basque speakers compared to total population](#)
Table 3: [Official Languages in the Basque Country](#)
Table 4: [Definitions of Bilingual Teaching Models](#)
Table 5: [EIMA subsidies - 1998](#)
Table 6: [Pupils per class ratios in state preprimary education](#)
Table 7: [Pupils by model in Navarre in the school year 1998-99](#)
Table 8: [Pupils by model in primary education in the French Basque Country in the school year 1997-98](#)
Table 9: [Production and Reproduction of the Basque language](#)
Table 10: [Economic coordinates of Basque language situation](#)

0. FOREWORD

Explanations of the situation of the Basque language in the education system of the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) or of the sociolinguistic situation of the Basque language as a whole in English (indeed, even in Basque, Spanish and French) are, with few exceptions, patchy. The object of the present document is to provide a more coherent background picture. It provides greatest detail on the education system but it also includes less detailed reference to Basque in society. The reason is that the language policy in education cannot be understood without some notion of the broader societal background. For similar reasons the text makes some mention of the situation in the other territories where Basque is spoken. Attention is nevertheless particularly focussed on the BAC. The text is intended as descriptive background reading for foreign academics and language loyalist visitors to the Department of Education of the Government of the Basque Country. It covers the topics which have proved to be of interest over the years.

The text contains seven chapters. The first contains basic background information which, it is hoped, will allow the visitor to have a basic grasp of the entities and magnitudes to be dealt with. The second chapter provides a brief history of the social situation of the language, charting in particular its gradual decline up to very recently. Chapter three discusses status and corpus initiatives for the Basque language (except in education) undertaken in the hope of reversing language shift (RLS). Three whole chapters are dedicated to education: after a rapid review of recent educational history from the point of view of language maintenance, chapter four deals primarily with the initial organisational moves by the Basque Government in primary and secondary education up to about 1985-86; the following chapter deals with the evolution of the same educational levels in the BAC since that date; chapter six looks into other aspects of education. Finally, chapter seven tries to give some idea of criticisms and evaluations of present language planning policy, together with some concluding observations on future prospects for the language.

I am grateful to my colleagues Jose Mari Berasategi, Ibon Olaziregi and particularly Mikel Zalbide for their criticisms of earlier drafts of this text.

[Return to table of contents](#)

1. A FEW BASIC CONCEPTS

Relatively little information is available to the English speaking world on the Basque Country. To help readers situate themselves the following topics will be discussed briefly in the following paragraphs in this chapter:

- territorial and administrative organisation of the Basque Country;
- a brief review of basic historical, economic and political facts;
- a discussion of what constitutes Basqueness;
- basic data on the language, Basque speakers and their distribution.

1.1. TERRITORIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANISATION

Although it may seem surprising, naming the Basque Country and its constituent parts is not a simple matter. Several languages are involved; the same word may mean different things to different users or have had different uses over time. As it is important to make clear what entity is being talked about this first subsection will deal largely with the names of the territorial units.

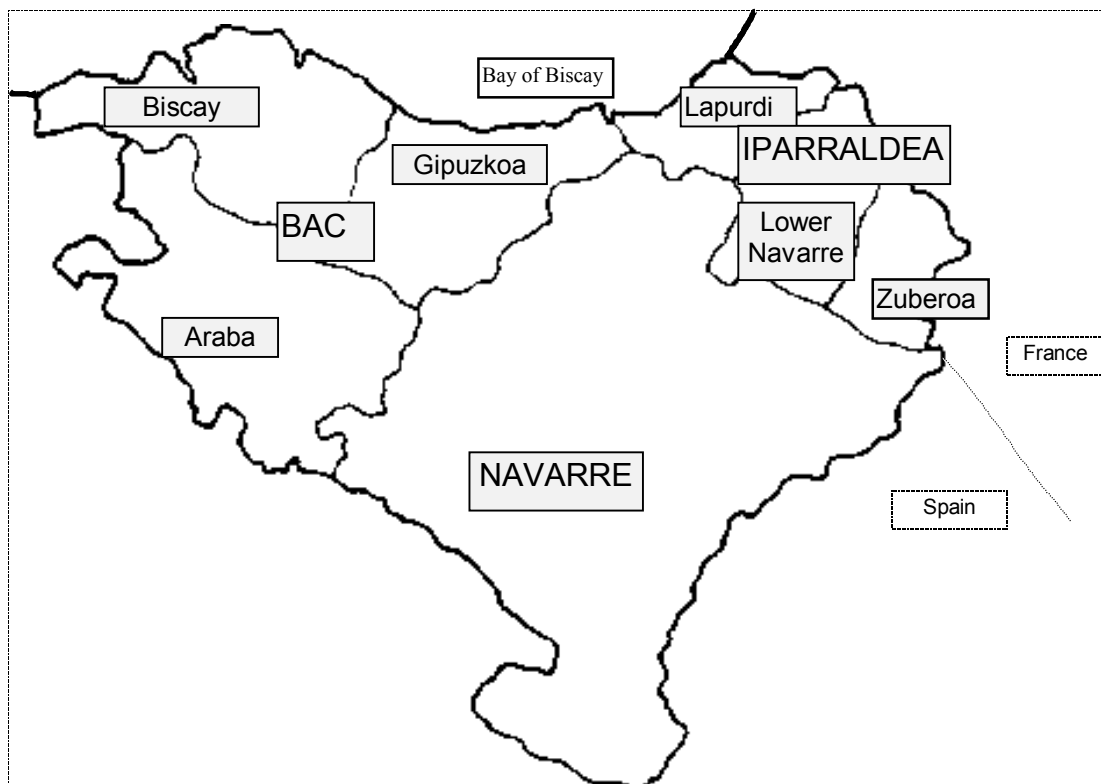
Table 1: Summary of territorial organisation and names

The Basque Country/ Euskal Herria / <i>El País Vasco</i> / Euskadi / <i>Le Pays Basque</i>				
<i>Iparralde(a)</i> (<i>Le Pays Basque</i> / <i>País Vasco francés/continental/norte</i>) (continental Basque Country) (part of <i>Pyénées-Atlantiques</i>)			Hegoalde(a) (<i>País Vasco español/peninsular/sur</i>) (peninsular Basque Country) Often qualified by the adjective <i>vasco-navarro</i> in Spanish	
<i>Lapurdi</i> (<i>Labort</i>) Capital: <i>Baiona</i> (<i>Bayonn</i> <i>e/</i> <i>Bayona</i>)	<i>Nafarroa</i> <i>Beherea</i> or <i>Baxena-</i> <i>barre</i> (<i>Basse</i> <i>Navarre</i>)	<i>Zuberoa</i> (<i>Soule</i>) Capital: <i>Maule</i> (<i>Mauléon/</i> <i>Mauleón</i>)	Basque Autonomous Community or Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, BAC (<i>Euskal Autonomi Erkidegoa, Euskal Autonomi Elkarte, EAE, Comunidad Autónoma del País Vasco, Comunidad Autónoma de Euskadi, Comunidad Autónoma Vasca, CAV</i> ; sometimes, loosely, <i>Euskadi</i> or <i>el País Vasco</i>) Traditional denomination in Spanish: <i>Vascongadas</i>	
	<i>Donibane Garazi</i> (<i>St. Jean Pied-de-port/San</i> <i>Juan Pié de Puerto</i>)		<i>Araba/</i> <i>Alava</i> Capital: <i>Gasteiz</i> (<i>Vitoria</i>)	<i>Biscay/</i> <i>Bizkaia/</i> <i>Vizcaya/</i> <i>Bilb(a)</i> (<i>Bilbao</i>)
				(Charter Community of) Navarre (<i>Nafarroako Foru Komunitatea, Comunidad Foral de Navarra</i>) Capital: <i>Iruñ(e)a</i> (<i>Pamplona/</i> <i>Pampelune</i>)

Note: Basque terms in bold letters; Spanish terms in italics; French terms underlined. Official names may include the same name in more than one language

Euskal Herria (*El País Vasco* in Spanish; *le Pays Basque* in French; the Basque Country) has traditionally been the term used by Basques to refer to the area occupied by the Basque speech community. It was in fact the only name used by Basques to name their area until the end of the 19th century. The terms *Euskaria* and *Euzkadi* (nowadays usually spelt *Euskadi*) were invented then to signal that stress was being put on a political-operative standpoint rather than an ethnocultural one. In other languages, though, other terms have also been used in the past. Thus, Basque speakers were widely known as Biscayans (cf. the English language place-name component: Biscayne) and their country of origin as Biscay. The Spanish cognates of these terms were used with identical meaning in Castille (central Spain) in particular. In modern usage, however, these terms are reserved to the Basque province of the same name and its inhabitants. Similarly, in Spain to the east of the Basque Country Basque speakers were often referred to collectively as the Navarrese (*navarros*) and their home as Navarre (*Navarra*), even when the whole Basque Country was meant. Perhaps the most common name for the country was the low latin *Vasconia* (also the etymological source of the name of neighbouring present-day Gascony, *Gascogne*) and, occasionally, *Cantabria*. In any case the area referred to has changed, mostly shrunk with the passage of time. Since the 19th century at least, however, the name *Euskal Herria* has been given by Basque cultural loyalists and, later, nationalists in particular to the larger area shown in figure 1. The area where Basque is natively spoken has nevertheless continued to decrease. Whether Basque has ever been spoken throughout that territory is extremely doubtful, though it has definitely been spoken beyond its confines. When referred to as the (independent) political entity desired by some, the territory is also known as *Euskadi*.

Figure 1: Map of the Basque Country



The part of the territory north of the international border between France and Spain is often referred to as *Iparraldea* (the North side) and the rest, amongst Basque writers at any rate, as *Hegoaldea* (the South side).

The continental part of the Basque Country is traditionally divided into three provinces: Lapurdi, Nafarroa Beherea or Baxenabarre (Lower Navarre) and Zuberoa. All three are without

administrative substance at the present time, but correspond to historically differentiated entities. Together they form just part of the modern French *département*, *Pyrénées-Atlantiques*. The formation of a separate French *département* of the Basque Country is one of the objectives pursued by many French Basques, especially nationalists.

With regard to the peninsular part of the country one should bear in mind that the whole of Spain has been divided into seventeen autonomous or self-governing regions, as a result of the application of the 1978 Spanish constitution. These regions also correspond to European economic regions. *Hegoaldea* is composed of two such regions: *Nafarroako Foru Komunitatea/Comunidad Foral de Navarra* ((the Charter Community of) Navarre); and the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country or Basque Autonomous Community (BAC), known variously as *Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoa* or *Euskal Autonomia Elkarte* (*EAE*)/*Comunidad Autónoma del País Vasco* (*CAPV*) or *Comunidad Autónoma Vasca* (*CAV*) and, more loosely though quite commonly among Spanish speakers in particular, as *Euskadi* or *el País Vasco*. The territory of this second community has traditionally been known as *las (Provincias) Vascongadas* in Spanish, based on the ethnonym *vascongado* meaning a person who only speaks Basque. The territory of the BAC is subdivided into three provinces or counties: *Araba* (in Spanish *Alava*), *Bizkaia* (Biscay, in Spanish traditionally *Vizcaya*) and *Gipuzkoa* (in Spanish traditionally *Guipúzcoa*). Use of one or another term often depends on ideological preferences, particularly in Spanish.

1.2. ECONOMIC, HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL FEATURES

Only the briefest of mentions will be made of economic, historical and present day political features. The topic is worthy of a whole book in its own right. The object here is merely to hint at a complex background.

1.2.1. Basic geographic and economic features

The area shown in figure 1 covers 20,864 sq. km. The terrain is fairly mountainous with a maximum height of nearly 2,500 m. A number of hill and mountain ranges cross the country in a roughly east to west direction. The intervening land forms a series of plains. Some of the surface water runs into the Atlantic, the rest, via the Spanish river Ebro, into the Mediterranean. The climate, too, runs from Atlantic to Mediterranean, with a couple of transitional phases.

Road infrastructure has been considerably improved over the last twenty years. The country has five airports, with Bilbao and Biarritz (next to Bayonne) the major passenger airports. Rail transport is on the whole slow and infrequent, though Bilbo now has its first underground line and the building of a new high speed link between the three provincial capitals of the BAC is under discussion at the moment. High speed trains to Paris and Madrid seem to be a long way off yet. For many journeys coach is a more rapid alternative.

Population is more or less stable at present and its distribution uneven. The three coastal provinces are densely populated (over 70% of total), while inland ones are far less so. Biscay contains over 40% of the total population mainly in the Bilbao conurbation, occupied primarily in industry (many metalworking industries, machine tools, electrical and electronic goods) and services. In the rest of the province some farming is carried out and an ever-reducing amount of fishing takes place from the coastal ports, while small industries are common (particularly canning along the coast). The Bilbao conurbation can be considered an industrial area in decline since the slump of the shipbuilding and steel industries in the seventies.

Gipuzkoa has a more decentralised population structure, with a number of highly industrialised small towns, probably in part because it has many narrow valleys. A conurbation of sorts seems to be forming from Donostia to the international border (and potentially continuing up the coast



as far as Bayonne). Industries are on the whole fairly small and family firms numerous. The province is also headquarters to the largest complex of cooperative companies (industry, distribution, education, banking, health...) in western Europe. Industrial activity includes machine-tools, arms, paper, electrical and electronic goods. Some smallholdings are still worked, but often in combination with work in some local factory.

Araba is again differently structured with 80% of the population living in the main town. The more recently industrialised Gasteiz provides much work in the car, aeroplane and related industries. The production of wine (Rioja) has a certain importance in the southernmost part of the province. In all three above-mentioned provinces close on half of the population works in the industrial sector, though the service sector has been the area of greatest growth over the last few years.

The industrial sector is relatively less important in the four remaining provinces: about 35% in Navarre and 30% in Iparralde. Navarre is very varied: industry is concentrated round Pamplona and three or four other areas. The mountainous northern area depends economically on its farms and woods, some summer tourism and occasional factories, while the southern part (excepting industrial enclaves) is eminently rural (wine, asparagus, peppers, tomatoes, artichokes, cereals, fruit and related processing industries). Lapurdi has a major tourist industry, with a modest degree of industrialisation round Bayonne. Population there has grown from the in-migration of retired French people. This in turn has attracted locals from the two inland French Basque provinces where farming is one of the main economic activities. The building, furniture, chemical, textile, leather, footwear and food industries are to be found throughout the Basque Country. Two major flourishing ports, Bilbao and Bayonne, together with smaller ones, are actively involved in international commerce, maintaining a centuries old tradition.

1.2.2. Some historical features

There are numerous prehistoric remains in the Basque Country. Romans, Arabs, Visigoths and Franks lived, farmed and fought there. The Basque Country was gradually christianised, seemingly at very different historical moments. Though now increasingly secularized, the country has until very recently been predominantly Roman Catholic in religion. The major political development of the Middle Ages was the rise of the kingdom of Navarre. This managed to unite a territory which roughly included the present day Basque Country for a few years in the reign of Antso III, nicknamed *the Great*, in the eleventh century. The Basque Country was fully participant in European mediaeval life. The system was more or less feudal in nature, though it never developed the forms regarded as typical throughout western Europe. The kingdom of Navarre remained throughout a central player; the Cluny monastic reform reached the Basque Country; the development of the mediaeval pilgrim route to Compostela, too, had its consequences.

By the fourteenth century a number of charter towns were growing, serving to promote production and trade, to strengthen the hand of the king against local barons and to provide protection for the local population. Eventually, the king of Castille intervened to stop local barons feuding, though Araba, Biscay and Gipuzkoa continued to enjoy special charter rights and to hold provincial assemblies. The three provinces of the French Basque Country were gradually incorporated into the French crown. Similarly, in the sixteenth century Navarre was joined to the Spanish crown by having the same king, though with a special kingdom status. There were serious economic crises in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, though there were later more positive developments with the creation of a New World trading company and other Enlightenment initiatives.

The 1789 French revolution led to new centralising forces, opposed to traditional rights and privileges, first in the French Basque Country and subsequently in the peninsular part. The south suffered from invasion by the troops of the French Convention and later by Napoleon's. The

English Duke of Wellington led the allies in clearing the Basque Country of French troops by 1814. The liberal Spanish constitution of 1812 did away with charter rights in the peninsular Basque Country. These were only partially restored afterwards. In accordance with a general policy of increasing state uniformity the kingdom of Navarre was finally reduced to the status of a province. Later in the century, there were two civil wars in the Basque Country as locals took sides for and against a pretender to the Spanish throne by the name of Carlos. One of the outcomes of those Carlist wars was the final loss of special charter rights. These were substituted by a system of Economic Concerts according to which the provincial governments collected taxes and subsequently paid an agreed amount over to the central government in Madrid.

The rapid industrialisation of Biscay in particular and, for a brief period, of Gipuzkoa in the second half of the nineteenth century brought with it the rise of new political forces. These were socialists, to a lesser extent anarchists and, by the end of the century, Basque nationalists, who all grew in number and influence. At the same time many rural Basques emigrated to America, from both the continental and peninsular parts of the Basque Country. Socialist and nationalist influence expanded in the first decades of the twentieth century, leading to autonomy for most of what is now the BAC in the first months of the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). Biscay and Gipuzkoa, considered traitor provinces by Franco, lost their economic concerts after the war.

Profound economic changes with a noticeable increase in industrialisation allied with a consumer boom in the sixties paved the way for a more modern urbanised and increasingly secular Europeanised society, incompatible in the long term with dictatorship for reasons of both internal development and international context. Thus, at Franco's death in 1975, the dynamics of the social and political situation that had developed in Spain in the last years of the régime led to the installation of a constitutional monarchy under king Juan Carlos I. Since then the economic concerts have been reestablished/renewed, a considerable degree of executive power devolved to the autonomous regions and the Basque Country has become increasingly integrated in Europe. No such notable changes have occurred in the French Basque Country, if we exclude the in-migratory tendency mentioned above.

1.2.3. Present day political scene

Present day Basque politics must largely be considered under three separate headings.

In the BAC Basque nationalists have dominated both the parliament and the Basque government since their inception, but have had to rely increasingly on coalitions within the Basque nationalist fold or with the Spanish socialist party to ensure stable government. Up to the time of the ETA cease-fire in 1998, no party was willing to contemplate agreements with the Basque nationalist HB (Herri Batasuna, 'Popular Unity') party, which pursues independence and has a relationship with ETA similar to that traditionally maintained by Sinn Féin with the IRA in Northern Ireland. Amongst the Basque nationalist parties including EA (Eusko Alkartasuna, 'Basque Solidarity'), HB (now Batasuna, 'Unity') and the now defunct EE (Euskadiko Ezkerra, 'Basque Left'), the PNV/EAJ (Partido Nacionalista Vasco/Eusko Alderdi Jeltzalea, 'Basque Nationalist Party') has always been dominant. The strength of each party varies considerably from province to province. The PNV/EAJ is the oldest Basque nationalist party, having been founded by Sabino Arana at the end of the nineteenth century. The parties active throughout the Spanish state are PP (Partido Popular, 'Popular Party'), PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español, 'Spanish Workers Socialist Party') and IU (Izquierda Unida, 'United Left'). A more recent local development has been the appearance of UA (Unidad Alavesa, 'Unity of Araba') in Araba, a locally based reaction against Basque nationalism. More important has been the growth of the right wing PP, in parallel with its rise to power in Spain as a whole in the late nineties. The Basque nationalist/Spanish nationalist divide is often as important as that between Left and Right, with Basque nationalists undergoing a slow decline since the mid eighties though still in the majority.

All the above mentioned parties are active in Navarre, with the exception of UA. One additional party in Navarre is UPN (Unión del Pueblo Navarro, 'Union of the People of Navarre'). The existence of this party was probably the source of the idea for the creation of UA, as it places an anti Basque nationalist stress on the distinct personality of Navarre. This right-wing party has not, however, always managed to dominate the parliament nor, hence, the government of Navarre. It has also suffered internal dissent, leading to the creation of CDN (Convergencia de Demócratas de Navarra, 'Convergence of Navarre Democrats'). The Spanish socialists have considerable strength too and with or without coalition have also governed in Navarre for a number of years. Basque nationalist forces are relatively weak in Navarre.

They are noticeably weaker in Iparralde, constituting only around 10% of the total vote in the latter. The state-wide parties are generally dominant there, particularly the right of centre parties.

Vexed topics in the BAC and Navarre include: high unemployment and suitable counter policies including industrial restructuring; the use of violence for political ends; possible cooperation between the two regions; the language question; the distribution of power between the provincial councils and the government in the BAC; relationships with the Spanish state government.

1.3. BASQUENESS

It is not easy to say who is Basque, as a number of definitions of Basqueness are available and commonly used.

- One possible definition is to state that Basques are those people who speak Basque. This definition would have been the primary one in the past when ethnicity and language coincided: one was an X-man via X-ish. Many Basque speakers consider that language is an essential ingredient of their Basqueness.
- Another, broader definition is to say that people of Basque ancestry are Basque, even if they can't speak the language. This definition thus includes X-men via Y-ish.
- A third, broader still, is to say that anybody living and/or working in the present-day Basque Country (see figure 1) is Basque.
- A fourth definition would make Basqueness depend on self-perception. Under this definition, Basques are those persons who consider themselves to be so.

Each of these definitions and others would give us a different set of people, partly or largely coincident with the other sets.

Historically, Basques have virtually never been united in a single state. But most have shared a series of special legal and economic rights which have distinguished them from other local populations. There is nowadays a widespread belief that the Basques constitute a nation. Other cultural features, too, are associated with Basqueness, particularly with those Basques living in a traditional rural setting: there are recognisably Basque types of food and drink, dance, music, song, dress, religious practice, social customs, sports, work processes and implements. But many people who consider themselves Basque now live in towns, small or large, and may exhibit few or none of these characteristics, beyond the fact that they live in the Basque Country. Many monolingual Spaniards and French consider themselves Basque on the basis of ancestry or at least residence.

This lack of a single, clear, societally shared and accepted definition of Basque identity spills over into the cultural sphere. There are recurring discussions of such matters as the following. Is there such a thing as Basque art? If so, who produces it? When we talk of Basque literature should we include only works in Basque or also those of Spanish speakers closely related to the

Basque Country by birth, residence, choice of subject matter or whatever? Many definitions are possible.

In the rest of this book, however, we shall be concentrating on people who claim to be Basque speakers, roughly a quarter of all those living in the Basque Country. Such people are on the whole only distinguishable with difficulty from their non Basque-speaking counterparts, whether we consider physical characteristics, type of employment, level of education, size and structure of family, religious behaviour or any other feature. There are, nevertheless, potentially quantifiable differences. For example, the voting patterns of Basque speakers probably do not coincide with those of non-speakers.

1.4. BASQUE AND ITS SPEAKERS

Following a brief description of the language, some idea will be given of the present number of speakers of the language and their distribution.

1.4.1. Description of the language

Questions are commonly asked about the origins of the Basque language. Unlike other western European languages, Basque is neither a Romance nor a Germanic nor a Celtic language. It is in fact not even part of the Indo-European language family, nor is it related to any other known living language. Various theories have been proposed. One such theory relates it to an African language family, another to the Caucasian one and, most promisingly, a third connects it to now extinct Iberian languages. In the latter case, there are remarkable phonological coincidences, but Basque has been of little help otherwise in deciphering Iberian texts. Lack of documentation hampers all efforts. So for all practical purposes Basque must be regarded as an isolated language with no known relatives.

Basque uses the Roman alphabet without diacritics, except for the letter *ñ* which it shares with Spanish. It nevertheless retains a distinctive appearance in written form, visibly very different from the surrounding Romance languages. The phonology of Basque is on the whole fairly similar to that of Spanish. In fact, Basque quite possibly influenced Spanish since early Spanish seems to have been the Romance language produced by Basques.

As far as Basque morphology is concerned two major features are worthy of mention. First of all, Basque is an ergative language. In other words, it has a case denoting the agent of an action. Stated in a way perhaps more familiar to speakers of English, the subject of a transitive verb is marked by a suffix, whereas the subject of an intransitive verb is not. Secondly, the finite verb, in most cases constituted with the aid of an auxiliary, can contain a summary of all the noun phrases in the sentence. Thus, the finite verb can contain reference to the subject, object and indirect object of the sentence and even a marker for the gender of the person spoken to, in certain special cases. Suffixes are widely used and more than one can be attached to a single word under certain conditions.

Basque is usually described as an SOV language. That is, the unmarked word order is subject, object, verb. There are, however, many utterances which do not conform to this pattern. Basque is also described as a postpositional language. Thus, prepositions or more accurately postpositions are placed after the nouns they govern. The noun qualified by a relative clause comes at the end of the clause, not the beginning. Adjectives, on the other hand, are placed after the noun, not before it.

With regard to vocabulary Basque has borrowed widely first from Latin, then from Occitan, above all from Spanish and, to a lesser degree, from French. Derivation and compounding are also frequently used in the coining of new words.

Basque has a number of flourishing dialects. This is hardly surprising in a minority language which is still undergoing a process of standardisation and does not enjoy political unity of its

territory. Nevertheless, dialectal differences are not strong enough to hide the common origin. Literate users of the language have relatively little difficulty in understanding each other's written texts, particularly as use of the thirty year old written standard has spread rapidly. However, comprehension difficulties do occur at the oral level, particularly between speakers of geographically distant dialects who have little contact with each other.

1.4.2. Approximate numbers of speakers

In the following table privately collected survey information has been used for the French Basque Country alongside census figures for the peninsula.

Table 2: Basque speakers compared to total population

	TOTAL POPULATION	POPULATION OVER 2	BASQUE SPEAKERS	
			Number	%
BAC *	2,104,041	2,068,927	543,617	26.3
<i>Araba</i>	<i>272,447</i>	<i>267,557</i>	<i>22,995</i>	<i>8.6</i>
<i>Biscay</i>	<i>1,155,106</i>	<i>1,136,358</i>	<i>215,219</i>	<i>18.9</i>
<i>Gipuzkoa</i>	<i>676,488</i>	<i>665,012</i>	<i>305,403</i>	<i>45.9</i>
Navarre	519,277*	501,989**	50,951**	10.5
Iparralde	249,275***	212,400****	56,200****	26.4
Basque Country	2,872,593	2,783,316	650,768	23.4

Sources: * 1991 Census; ** 1986 Census; *** 1990 Census; ****Over 15's only: estimate based on 1996 sociolinguistic survey.

Census figures are commonly considered unreliable as a guide to language competence. This is an opinion which deserves further elaboration, as it would be plainly unjust to disregard them altogether. The nature of the questions themselves is often one source of difficulty, as they are often not comparable from one census to another, let alone from one speech community to another. Another source is the non-linguistic factors which intrude in the determination of individual responses. Obviously, Basque census figures are no exception. This is most immediately obvious in the French census which has until now asked no language question at all, treating Basque as non-existent. This state of affairs is shortly to be remedied in part, as it seems the French government wishes to collect information on the use of languages other than French in France. As such questions cannot legally be included in the census itself they are to be introduced in an accompanying survey. The survey should thus provide a broader sample of the populace than any previous attempt to gather data on Basque speakers in the French Basque Country to date.

Since 1981 the five-yearly censuses south of the international border do include language questions. But census information is only partly comparable from one to the next. In the BAC in 1981 a single question was asked on the mother tongue; in 1986 a second question on present language competence was included and in 1991 a third related to the language used in the household. The first question asks respondents to specify their mother tongue: Basque, Spanish, both or another language. The second asks respondents to register their present competence in each of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) according to three different categories: nil, with difficulty, well. The third asks which language is most frequently used at home: the four reply categories are identical to the mother tongue question ones. The presence of three questions provides an interesting opportunity to examine shifts in individual language and collective competence over time.

But while such census figures are helpful in determining the size of the collective involved and its evolution over time, they provide relatively little information on language use. In addition, the system of self-report is itself notoriously subject to distortion by emotional and political factors and even by respondents' beliefs about what is expected of them. Indeed, some consider that census figures of Basque speakers are inflated by a tendency of respondents to exaggerate their level of competence. The inclusion of a 'with difficulty' category has also led to further

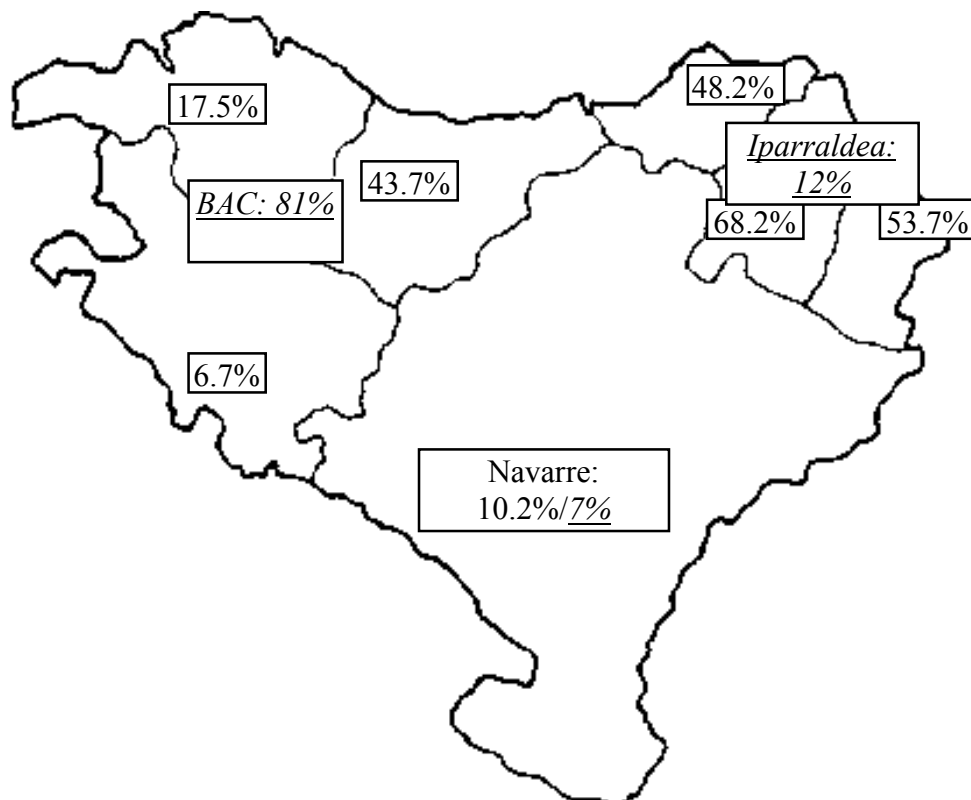
argument about the weight to be given to such limited language competence. As a result of the relative value of the census, a considerable number of other studies of language knowledge and also use have been undertaken, though the population taken into account is often more circumscribed. Such studies may use the traditional questionnaire based self-report technique, though in some cases efforts have been made to develop a new methodology based on direct measurement of use or other techniques. The figures given above can be compared with the *Euromosaic* figures given in chapter 7.

For a more sombre view of language competence one should bear in mind the results of public examinations in the language. Only around 60,000 people have passed one or more of these examinations which invariably contain a strong literacy component. It should nevertheless be borne in mind that participation in these examinations is optional, though increasingly popular with young people, and thus does not constitute a valid sample of the total population. Access to such examinations is particularly difficult or unusual in some areas. Secondly, older people who may be extremely competent orally, and moderately or even fully literate in at least one major European language, often have very limited literacy skills in Basque. This precludes their taking part in such examinations. Mass literacy in Basque is a novel phenomenon, though practically all living Basque speakers are bilingual. In most cases they have native or native-like competence in either French or Spanish, usually with fully developed literacy skills.

1.4.3. Distribution of speakers

The map in figure 2 shows percentages of speakers within each traditional Basque province in ordinary letters and the speakers of the area in question as a percentage of all Basque speakers in underlined italics. In absolute numbers, Biscay and Gipuzkoa contain the largest numbers of Basque speakers, their presence being obviously far more noticeable in the latter than in the former. Both contain considerable numbers of urban speakers in contrast to Iparraldea and Navarre where distribution is, broadly speaking, more rural in character. Araba is the least Basque-speaking province of all.

Figure 2: Distribution of Basque speakers



In plain numerals: Basque speakers as a percentage of inhabitants of province
(Sources: Araba/ Biscay/ Gipuzkoa: Euskal urtekari estatistikoa 1986; Navarre: Council rolls 1-4-86;
Lower Navarre/ Lapurdi*/Zuberoa: Sü-Azia-Siadeko * 1982, based on some villages only.)
In underlined italics: Basque speakers of administrative area indicated as a percentage of Basque speakers in Basque
Country (Sources: see table 2 above)

Some additional speakers live outside the Basque Country, in particular in other parts of Spain and France, and also in the New World, especially in the United States and some Central and South American countries.

1.5. CONCLUSION

Basqueness and the Basque Country are not easy terms to define. But however we define the Basques, it should be clear that the Basques are a modernised people well integrated in western Europe. The events of European history have had their consequences in the Basque Country as elsewhere on the continent, even if the details are less well known and researched. As far as their language situation is concerned, they are more akin to the Welsh than, say, the Irish or the Scots or, looking further afield, Maori or American Native Indians in their respective territories.

Knowing Basque or, more precisely, using one's Basque language gives such people a history as a speech-community and a specific series of problems and concerns (and, occasionally, solutions) often unknown to non-speakers, whatever else they might have in common as joint inhabitants of Basque territory. It is this common story of Basque **speakers** that we now turn to examine.

[Return to table of contents](#)

2. LIFE AND DECLINE OF THE BASQUE LANGUAGE

As far as is known, Basque has always been spoken natively in the same area. This area includes and surrounds what we now call the Basque Country, with an extension that has varied considerably over the centuries. Thus, it seems that at the beginning of the Christian era Basque-related dialects were spoken both north and south of the Pyrenees and much further east along the mountain chain than at the present time. Names of Basque origin appear in Latin texts from southwestern France. The collapse of Roman imperial power probably saved the language from being completely replaced by Latin. It began to extend southwestward until Spanish became the established Romance language around it on the peninsula. Since then the area where Basque is spoken natively has shrunk, a shrinkage which was at times vigorously pursued by the state-unifying authorities.

Names and phrases appear in Latin and Spanish documents with ever increasing frequency from the Middle Ages onwards. The first text on paper comes from the eleventh century. It contains just a few words in the form of a gloss on a Latin manuscript. The first literary texts date back to the late Middle Ages, preserved for us by sixteenth century writers. The first printed text seems to have been a rather battered translation included by Rabelais in one of his books. The first book was published in 1545. That brief collection of poems gave rise to a publishing tradition unbroken till the present day. Until the eighteenth century the few texts published were mostly related to religious matters. Differences in dialect meant that there was no unified spelling and no unified literary dialect: thus more than one dialect came to develop a literary tradition at different times. There was an early elegant translation of the New Testament into Basque (1571). This could have provided a literary standard as biblical translations did elsewhere in Europe, but the failure of the protestant tradition in the Basque Country coupled with the overwhelming success of the catholic counter-reformation ensured that the text remained virtually unknown.

But most Basques had little contact with written Basque. They were basically an illiterate monolingual group. Just a few members of the Basque community also knew the major neighbouring language. They were thus able to carry out dealings with speakers of those languages or to keep official records in them, as Basque was not usually a language of administration. This situation, where there was a clear and largely unchanging division of societal functions between two languages, is known technically as stable diglossia. In the case of Basque it seems to have lasted virtually unchanged until around 1700-1750, when it began to show the first signs of breaking down. The reasons for the initial breakdown are as yet unclear because the topic has been insufficiently researched. But the breakdown seems to have been related to decisions by those in power and aided by church authorities. That initial shift from Basque to Spanish was strongest in rural Araba and later in central and eastern Navarre.

Subsequently, several factors helped cause further change. One root factor was industrialisation, particularly strong in Biscay after about 1850 and in Gipuzkoa mainly in this century. This had two side-effects of major importance for the survival of the language. One was in-migration, the arrival of large numbers of non-Basque speaking workers in the new industrial towns. The second was the ever-growing urbanisation of Basque speakers. Thus, increasingly, Basques who had not previously needed Spanish found it necessary to learn and use it, as they moved to the towns. Many other Basques emigrated either to the US, central and south America or, in the case of French Basques, also to other parts of France, particularly Paris. The traditional organisation of society survived much longer on the French side of the border.

The involvement of the Spanish Basque provinces in the two nineteenth century Carlist civil wars led to a considerable loss of local power. The gradual spread of schooling also worked against Basque, as in most (but never all) cases the language was either forbidden (particularly in Spain) or used merely to help students learn the major language (particularly in France).

Compulsory military service was also a way of making Basques learn the major state language. And in Spain the administration and the church made it increasingly difficult to use Basque in books. All these factors weakened the position of the Basque language and led to a breakdown of the previous stable situation.

The situation of the Basque language continued to weaken in spite of the attempts made to stop or slow decline. And even those attempts came to an abrupt end in the peninsular part of the country during the Spanish civil war when Franco finished occupying the Spanish Basque Country in 1937. His rule, which survived until 1975, did not favour the use of Basque. Initially, official attitudes in Spain ranged from extremely repressive throughout the 1940's to cautious authorisation of minor initiatives against a general background of rejection in the 1950's. Later on, the regime showed increasing tolerance (but never acceptance) amid outbursts of repression in the 1960's and early 1970's. By that time official policy was being gradually undermined by an increasingly active pro-Basque language minority. On the French side of the border in recent years decline has been fomented by state omission and neglect, by ongoing out-migration of Basque speakers and by massive in-migration of non speakers, particularly in the coastal province of Lapurdi by French nationals going into retirement, more than active repression.

[Return to table of contents](#)

3. REVERSING LANGUAGE SHIFT (RLS)

What have Basques done to attempt to reverse the decline of their own language? This chapter has two major subdivisions: a brief summary of earlier initiatives and a much longer, second section on the present RLS effort.

3.1. EARLIER INITIATIVES AND THEIR RESULTS

As the traditional diglossic arrangement broke down in the peninsular part of the country in the eighteenth century, a consciousness of loss and language shift arose amongst Basque speakers, the first criticisms and even laments were to be heard and read and, subsequently, the first efforts at RLS arose.

There were a number of attempts at producing a standard written variety of Basque, but none can be said to have had widespread success. The lack of a mass of literate speakers was only the most obvious barrier to such an achievement. In any case, there were numerous attempts at codifying the language in dictionaries and grammars, but few coherent attempts at language planning as such. Though the defence of the Basque language is often popularly associated with the development of a traditionalist political movement in the nineteenth century, one cannot forget that opposing liberals in the Basque Country were often also users of the language. It was not until the turn of the century that a more serious awareness of the need for language planning to ensure language survival came into existence.

The father of Basque nationalism, Sabino Arana, was not a native speaker of Basque. He was, however, actively interested in supporting it and made a number of corpus (spelling reform, new vocabulary) and status reform proposals. His corpus reforms have had only modest success, though his work on vocabulary was the inspiration of a number of Basque language loyalists up until the Spanish civil war. In connection with the status of the language he participated in the first congress on the matter at the turn of the century and helped to launch a whole new process of awareness. His revision or outright invention of Basque christian names has recently had considerable success. Long after he first proposed the idea, Basques south of the international border have largely abandoned traditionally used Spanish names. The political party he founded has always concerned itself with promoting the use of the language and Basque identity in general. The various other Basque nationalist parties founded in the course of the present century have also done so to a greater or lesser degree.

This cultural effervescence became increasingly visible from the end of the nineteenth century on. Its institutionalisation can be situated just before 1920. A cultural society called *Eusko Ikaskuntza* came into being (1918) to assist in the consolidation of an authenticity-seeking (proto)elite and ensure the maintenance of a Basque viewpoint, including the examination of Basque subject matter within scientific disciplines. A subsequent, vital step (1919) was the creation of the (Royal since 1978-9) Academy of the Basque Language or *Euskaltzaindia*, specifically commissioned by its promoters to seek a way of creating a unified spelling and a unified literary standard. It should be underlined that though Basque political nationalism was perhaps the ultimate major sponsor of these moves, a number of independent personalities were also involved. After its creation the Academy set about its task of unifying the written language. There was a long drawn out struggle between purists and popularists, within the Academy and without, which affected vocabulary in particular. In education, too, there were new initiatives with the introduction of some Basque medium schooling in rural areas, particularly in Biscay. There was considerable growth in literary and non-fiction production in Basque. A number of periodicals gave scope for a whole host of new writers to try their skills. And traditional oral sung verse and local dramatics prospered too.

All these efforts came to a dramatic end in 1937 when the fall of Bilbao after about a year of civil war in Spain brought all Basque territory under the dictator's control. Public use of the language was proscribed. Some Basque language loyalists were shot, others imprisoned and yet others escaped into exile. But the pre-civil war Basque loyalist RLS effort had weaknesses of its own which would anyway, Franco or no, have endangered its success. Thus, language shift and loss of language competence even among those who continued to use the language went on unabated. There was little success achieved in the attempt to create a broad urban base of Basque speakers. And many of the plans, propaganda efforts and activities in favour of Basque identity were carried out in Spanish. This behaviour is often quite surprising to more recent Basque language loyalists. A failure to identify suitable priorities and establish a coherent plan is another obvious weakness. For example, this was the period of the expansion of various forms of mass entertainment and sport. But whilst laudable and to some degree successful efforts were made to rekindle traditional activities in these spheres, modern dancing, the cinema and the new spectator sports were largely ignored.

More fundamentally, the whole effort was just too weak, too lacking in intellectual and institutional support to make much headway in effectively implementing the language planning or the cultural identity planning of which it formed part. External political factors are also relevant to this failure. The international climate had been favourable to respecting the rights of nationalities at the end of World War I, but settled back into the old *status quo* once the treaty of Versailles had been signed. The political climate within Spain also changed around 1920. As a result hopes of Basque political autonomy were not to be satisfied for nearly twenty years more and then only briefly.

Nevertheless, it would be incorrect to suggest that the balance was entirely negative. On the positive side, a new national consciousness had been achieved and a long-running cultural programme had been defined. Basque language cultural production increased tremendously in quantity, quality and variety. The first tentative steps had been taken in education. Those steps were to be the inspiration of many in the sixties, both as regards the creation and management of schools, the academic studies to be pursued, the production of school materials and the definition of bilingual models of teaching. More sensible solutions for a route to language unity were under discussion. A considerable degree of unity was achieved in the matter of spelling. The criteria established for updating the lexicon have subsequently proved fruitful. And all this was realised with only minimal access to institutional financial resources.

3.2. THE PRESENT EFFORT: 1955 TO DATE

Now we are going to leave aside earlier initiatives and concentrate on the most recent attempt by the Basque speech community to reverse the decline of its mother tongue. This initiative is without doubt the most energetic and far-reaching of all attempts so far. It may be divided into roughly two phases. The first spans the latter half of the 1950's until nearly the end of the 1970's. The second one runs from then to date. The change in régime in Spain from dictatorship to constitutional monarchy in the period 1975-1980 means there are major differences between the two phases.

The starting point of the first phase can be associated with the revival of the public activity of *Euskaltzaindia*, the commencement of Koldo Mitxelena's (subsequently architect of the written standard) professional activity as a Basque philologist and cultural figure, the creation of *Egan* magazine, the start of post-war spontaneous sung verse competitions, renewed if limited production of books in Basque.

The first phase was preceded by modest activity abroad among exiles (publication of a few texts and periodicals). It can be characterised as an upsurge of enthusiasm and activity in defence of the Basque language in very difficult circumstances: lack of resources, of relevant know-how,

of official support, of a suitable legal framework. Given such negative circumstances the achievement of those years seems impressive:

- There was a flowering of Basque language literature, magazines, music and traditional dance;
- Basque medium primary and later secondary schools were set up at first illegally and in secret. Though still not legal, they achieved a minimum of official tolerance later on. They offered initially to native speakers and later increasingly to non native speakers the possibility of a Basque language education;
- Language schools for adults were also organised in difficult circumstances;
- The first Basque language certificates were established (1974) by *Euskaltzaindia*;
- The first major steps were taken (1968) towards achieving a unified written standard.

But, in the end, all these initiatives suffered from chronic financial, administrative and legal problems. They did not satisfy Basque language loyalists. These initiatives, however, had another vital consequence. There was a widespread consensus amongst Basque speakers and non-speakers alike that the new constitutional arrangements expected after the demise of Franco should recognise some sort of official status for Basque and permit the use of public funds for its protection and advancement.

We shall now look in detail at the second, more recent phase of this latest attempt at reversing the language shift, dividing the changes into two groups: initiatives relating to the internal state of the language (corpus planning) and initiatives relating to the social position of the language (status planning).

3.2.1. Corpus planning initiatives

Corpus planning initiatives almost always occur in a status planning context. They would have little sense otherwise. Nevertheless, in the following paragraphs we shall focus specifically on the corpus aspects of standardising and modernising the language, and the implementation, cultivation and domain expansion which need to accompany such changes.

3.2.1.1. Standardising and modernising the language

Throughout the late fifties and early sixties a small but active group of writers became engaged in defining some basic rules on the route towards a standard written language. This written standard is widely referred to as *batua*, 'the unified [language]'. A 1964 writers' meeting in Bayonne proved particularly fruitful. But the major step forward came in 1968 when the *Euskaltzaindia* gave its approval to a report presented by Koldo Mitxelena. In the report he set out basic criteria for the unification of the written language, particularly with regard to spelling, declension of nouns, traditional vocabulary and new terminology. In 1973 a decision on the conjugation of the auxiliary verbs was published. In 1978 further decisions were taken on the declension of nouns and demonstratives and other matters. Some of these areas are particularly important with regard to dialect differences.

Although the proposals gained widespread acceptance and were immediately put into practice by many writing at the time, not everybody was happy. The decision to preserve and extend the use of the letter *h* in spelling certain words particularly incensed some peninsular Basques. The decision was taken in order both to forge a connection with the continental Basque Country's remarkable 17th century literary production and also to help those present-day continental Basques who still pronounce it not to feel excluded. Although in fact a relatively minor decision, it was probably the most polemical. Secondly and perhaps not surprisingly, a number of older writers decided to keep to the tradition they had always written in. More important was the reaction of some users of the Biscayan dialect. Biscayan is a dialect with a considerable number of users but it was furthest from the proposed new standard. Thus some Biscayans felt their interests had not been properly respected and fought hard to secure a more favourable

solution. However, almost all Biscayan writers had accepted the common spelling by the early 1980's. A standard school Biscayan was defined for the primary level in Biscay in order to facilitate the move towards the written standard from the home dialect in those cases where the school authorities felt such a procedure was warranted. Finally, the *Euskaltzaindia* itself made it quite clear that its aim was never to do away with the dialects, but rather to facilitate communication between Basques of different dialects. In its opinion dialects continued to have a role to play, although a more limited one. With the passage of time and the obvious popular acceptance of the written standard the dispute is no longer at the forefront of concern. Some sort of *modus vivendi* is being worked out.

The Royal Academy of the Basque Language has continued to define different aspects of the standard written variety and has also produced a descriptive grammar of the language. So far it has shied away from taking decisions on the spoken language. The main exception to this tendency is the 1998 rules relating to the more formal spoken uses of the language. The rules call this the 'careful pronunciation of *batua*'. Nevertheless, the definition of the written standard has had a noticeable effect on oral production in more formal situations. Native dialect speakers tend to converge towards a more standardised spoken Basque. Learners are not normally taught local dialects. Considerable progress has been made on various dictionary making projects. By 2001 thirteen volumes (up to letter P) of a definitive dictionary based on a large number of traditional texts up until 1970 had already been published. Present-day Basque has undergone rapid expansion in vocabulary, standardisation in spelling and considerable change in style and is the object of a separate survey. The ultimate result of the Academy's work will be a reliable reference dictionary of the language. In the meantime, other organisations have produced technical dictionaries for numerous subjects, as well as encyclopaedias, everyday Basque/Basque, Basque/Spanish, Basque/French and Basque/English dictionaries, although the final responsibility for linguistic decisions corresponds to the Academy in these as in all corpus matters.

3.2.1.2. Implementation

Producing dictionaries and grammars is only a first step as far as developing the corpus of the language is concerned. For example, new words are of little use if they are not put into circulation and then accepted and used by the speakers of the language. In the Basque case, some of these new words, accepted spellings and standard dialect rules have entered users' active or at least passive knowledge of the language. This is due to authors using them massively in literature and school textbooks and to their appearance in the mass media. This does not mean that the dialects have disappeared. They are still dominant at the oral level, but they form a noticeably smaller proportion of written production. It seems that the written standard has found least acceptance north of the international border, but one must not lose perspective. In fact, the number of writers and readers involved there is relatively small.

3.2.1.3. Cultivation

There is another sense in which dictionaries and grammars are not enough. Each generation tends to evolve a new standard of good speaking and writing appropriate to its age. This is not necessarily a conscious task but simply the result of literary writers and public speakers, singers and poets struggling to make the language mean what they want to say. These users of the language frequently find that the topics, the styles, the forms of expression, even, in poetry, the systems of versification and metre of previous generations are not adequate to their interests. The search for aesthetically satisfying forms of expression leads them to establish new standards. In the Basque case there has been a veritable explosion in literary activity over the

past three decades. While one cannot yet point to the culmination of a new standard, there has been much experimentation, which is proof of a certain vigour in the language.

3.2.1.4. Expansion

Finally, the language is being put to new uses. News broadcasts, chat and quiz shows on radio and television require development of the language in a sphere unknown to previous generations. Even cowboys in westerns speak for the first time ever in Basque! Similarly, the entry of Basque into administration has required those involved to develop a new sort of language use, with its attendant requirements in coinage of new vocabulary and development of a standard style. In spite of these developments Spanish and French are still far and away the dominant languages in administration.

3.2.2. Status planning initiatives

It is one thing to be in the process of developing a form of Basque fit for use in a modernised western European setting. It is quite another to ensure genuine possibilities of its use. In the Basque case, that required a considerable change in the social status of Basque.

In whose hands are these status initiatives? We can define language planning as the authoritative allocation of resources to achieve given changes in the social organisation of language behaviour. Such a definition refers in a major way to governmental authorities. In this section we shall briefly review which legislative and governmental bodies are most directly involved in language planning for Basque.

Formulation of language laws has corresponded to the Spanish, BAC and Navarre parliaments. With the exception of a minor reference to education, there is no relevant enabling language law in France. The French and Spanish central governments have both intervened at various points in contributing to fixing the status of Basque but the bulk of governmental language planning is carried out directly within the territories involved.

These are the bodies responsible for language planning at each level of government in the southern part. In the BAC, the Basque Government created the Secretariat (later Secretariat-General) for Language Policy in 1983. Its head reported directly to the president of the government of the BAC. It has subsequently been integrated into the Department of Culture and is now run by a vice-minister of Culture. The body is responsible for overseeing both corpus and status planning aspects of language policy in the BAC. In particular, it is responsible for guidelines for civil servant Basquisition, data collection, funding and monitoring many corpus and status planning initiatives. At the same time the government of the BAC also set up an advisory council for Basque to advise on status planning matters, but the activity of this body has only been sporadic. Some government departments have their own staff specifically to deal with matters arising from Basquisition. The Department of Education has been particularly active in this sphere. It set up its own Basque service in 1981. A similar but more simplified system obtains in the Government of Navarre. Provincial governments and local councils may or may not have a Basque service of one or other rank to deal with specific matters related to the new official position of Basque. There is no comparable public body in the French Basque Country.

In the following subsections status planning initiatives with regard to the law, other sectors within the public sphere and finally the private sector will be discussed.

3.2.2.1. The law

First of all, the legal situation urgently required change. The 1978 Spanish constitution declared that Spaniards must know Spanish and that they have the right to use it (see section 4.4.2.4.).

But it also added that each regional community could declare its local language official, thus implying the right of those communities to regulate its use. So, in the following years, two Spanish regions declared Basque to be an official language: the BAC in 1979 and Navarre in 1982. Both communities have also produced language laws to spell out the effects of the new status of the language.

In the BAC the right to use Basque was made a personal right throughout the three provinces. The BAC law (1982) specifies some of the consequences of the individual right to use Basque. These include the right to the language of one's choice in dealings with the administration, in education and with the courts. One also has a right to receive cultural products (press, radio, TV etc.) in either language. The administration is obliged to offer bilingual services. If an individual requires some service, the administration must provide service in the language of that person's request. If the administration addresses a text (letters, official forms, signs in public buildings, road signs, public advertisements etc.) to a number of individuals whose language choice is unknown, the text must be bilingual. The government is further required to establish which civil service posts require a knowledge of both official languages. For all other posts knowledge of Basque is to be taken into consideration, but is not a requirement. The law was passed with a considerable degree of consensus in the Basque Parliament. However, it was immediately taken to the constitutional court by the Spanish state government on the grounds, amongst others, that

- a) the declaration of officiality could not, as it claimed to do, affect bodies of the Government of Spain operating in the BAC;
- b) knowledge of Basque could not be made a requirement for any public post.

In its judgement given in 1986, the court rejected the state prosecutor's arguments on these major counts, while accepting some of the submissions regarding various other minor details.

In contrast, the corresponding language law was not passed in Navarre until 1986, reflecting the lesser degree of political consensus on the subject. Three different language zones were distinguished, with varying personal rights in each regarding Basque. In the area in the north of Navarre where Basque is natively spoken citizens' rights are similar to those of citizens in the BAC. In the southernmost areas Basque speakers have practically no language rights. Pamplona and the surrounding area are treated as a special case. In this intermediate zone citizens have the right to communicate with the administration in Basque and the option, not the obligation, of having their offspring taught either Basque or in Basque. The application of the law has been the object of much further wrangling. In addition, Basque language television has not yet been made available officially throughout the province, due to fears on the part of Navarrese regionalists that it will be used as an instrument to spread Basque nationalist ideas. Indeed, in what seems to be an unprecedented step at the European level in recent years the present government of Navarre is now reversing some of its pro-Basque policies.

Table 3: Official Languages in the Basque Country

AREA	OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
Continental Basque Country	French
BAC	Spanish and Basque
Navarre	Spanish throughout; Basque as well in some areas.

No new legal protection, however, has been made available in France, though certain Basque medium activities are tolerated in non university education.

Table 3 summarizes the present situation with regard to official languages.

3.2.2.2. Other sectors in the public sphere

How have the language laws been applied? Education in the BAC will be dealt with separately in the next three chapters. Other areas that have been given considerable importance in the BAC include the media and administration.

In the BAC two public radio stations and one public television channel broadcast entirely in Basque, though functioning behind the scenes is sometimes in Spanish. In administration the Basque Government has made a considerable effort to comply with the legislation mentioned above. A number of government decrees have been passed. As a result, the way in which the government is proceeding is quite clearly defined. All public service posts in the Basque Government (including education, regional police and health services), the three provincial governments and town councils have or will have one of a number of language levels assigned to them. The proportion of those posts where that language requirement is compulsory is related to the proportion of Basque speakers in the territory served by the public body in question. The public servant with tenure occupying or wishing to occupy a given post must attain the level of Basque required for it (to be demonstrated by examination) unless

- a) s/he has already reached the age of 45;
- b) s/he has been granted exemption on the grounds of manifest incapacity for language learning;
- c) the date for compulsory application of the language requirement has not yet arrived.

New entrants to the civil service and officials already working are entitled to some training at public expense. Officials already holding posts with a compulsory requirement about to come into force may even obtain full time release for language training at public expense. With the exception of education the language requirement has not yet come into force in the immense majority of posts. The law nevertheless clearly states that measures must be taken to ensure gradual Basquisition of local government officials in order for them to be able to make citizens' rights effective.

Where politicians, officials responsible for carrying out the Basquisition policies, public pressure and civil servant willingness coincide in, for example, a local council, considerable advances have been made in the Basquisition of personnel. However, these factors do not often concur and progress, it seems, is slow. Further, initial plans have often been subsequently cut back. Thus, a lower level of Basque is required instead of a higher one. Dates for requirements to be brought into force are put back and so on. Governmental bodies seem to have found ways of bending the regulations in favour of monolingual Spanish speakers, where this is what is desired.

But the fundamental problem lies elsewhere. Language competence does not ensure language use. And language use depends on other factors. With regard to the use of the language in delivering services to the general public it relies particularly on public demand. This is relatively weak outside the education sector. Basques are on the whole fairly hesitant to use their language in relations with the administration because they have difficulty in doing so. Lack of schooling in the language, the novelty of official terminology and a long tradition of dealing with officialdom in Spanish mean many Basque speakers feel uncomfortable using the language for relations with the administration. Considerable progress has nevertheless been made in the production of bilingual forms, signage, advertisements etc. for public use. However, little has been done to ensure a welcoming attitude on the part of the administration in the face of the use of Basque by citizens. Rather than encourage Basque speakers to use the language, some officials frankly discourage use of the language. There is a clear discrepancy between official guidelines and the practice of many civil servants.

As a working language between different offices within the administration, the use of written Basque depends largely on both individual interest to write such documents and collective willingness to receive them. Many native speakers will willingly discuss work matters in

Basque face to face or over the 'phone. But for most written purposes they have in general not lost their preference for using Spanish, the language in most cases of their education. The few that do produce internal documents in Basque not infrequently meet with outright rejection or at least objections from other sectors of the administration. In a word, the pressure to continue working in Spanish is considerable. With few exceptions, no satisfactory way has yet been found to ensure the free circulation of Basque language documents. In the BAC government their existence is primarily limited to services which of their nature are involved with Basque language matters.

3.2.2.3. Private sector initiatives

Opportunities to work in Basque are few and far between. There are a number of 'naturally' Basque companies. These include small rural farms, certain rural industries, fishing boat crews and small town shops and workshops where tradition has sometimes ensured a Basque speaking workforce as well as a number of modern cultural service companies working in Basque, such as record and book shops, dictionary writing groups, theatre groups, small Basque publishers, the Basque language press, cultural organisations, certain church groups etc. On the whole, few jobs in the private sector have a formal language requirement. Advertisements occasionally specify oral competence, more rarely written competence. A 1996 survey of vacancy advertisements for degree holders published in the local press of the BAC suggests that Basque was required or positively valued in just under 10% of the vacancies. On the other hand, English was required or valued for 57% of the posts. Relatively little has been done to introduce Basque to the work sphere, though the government language planning body has about sixty projects (2001) under way in private firms to promote Basquisition. Some larger organisations do make modest efforts to attend the public in the language of its choice and some local councils have promoted the use of Basque in local shops. Thus, information desks may be staffed by Basque speakers; phone books are partly bilingual as product documentation may also be; a little publicity is in Basque. One state-wide supermarket chain of Basque origin has introduced a multilingual labelling policy, using Spanish, Basque, Catalan and Galician on own-brand products. In some savings banks cash withdrawal machines have a Basque language option and in at least one tele-banking in Basque is also possible.

The town of Arrasate/Mondragón has become known as the home of the largest cooperative holding company in western Europe. It is also of interest with regard to language planning, as it has promoted a number of initiatives in the private sector which are worthy of mention because they have given rise to similar initiatives elsewhere. With town council support a grass-roots Basque language loyalist organisation there, *Arrasate Euskaldun Dezagun (AED)* ('Let's make Arrasate Basque speaking'), has set up first of all a weekly town newspaper, full of local news. This highly successful venture has since been copied in around sixty other towns. Subsequently, a local TV station was similarly set up, with responsibility for running it falling to a newly created cooperative body called *ARKO*. Next, a language agreement binding signatory organisations to use Basque only in both their oral and written relationships with each other was established, with the assistance of the BAC government language planning body and the town council. Both public and private bodies in the area have signed. As in this example of Arrasate practically all initiatives of this sort depend on public support at least in the initial phases. There is a relative lack of private sponsorship.

Language schools for youths and adults to learn or improve their Basque are a major feature of the Basque speaking private sector. They will be dealt with in more detail in section 6.4. along with publicly owned language schools.

[Return to table of contents](#)

4. EDUCATION (I): THE EARLY DAYS

As in most western European language minorities, in the Basque Country too education has been both the motor for RLS and the area where there has been greatest change. The immense majority of native Basque speaking children south of the Franco-Spanish border now carry out their primary schooling entirely in Basque. Spanish is a compulsory subject from age 6 and English quite often is too. If the children attend an academically oriented secondary school, all their secondary schooling will quite possibly be Basque medium as well. An ever-increasing number of non-native children follow the same pattern or, like some French speakers of Basque, have about half their time-table in Basque. At the university level very few indeed can study their entire degree in Basque, but the opportunities to take some subjects at least in Basque is on the increase.

Two major problems have occurred in developing Basque medium education: shortages of teachers and of teaching materials. In both cases considerable progress has been made, particularly at the lower educational levels. Around half of all school teachers in the BAC now have a level of Basque considered sufficient to teach in. And a considerable variety of school materials is now available in Basque, including texts, audio and audiovisual materials, computer software and even a handful of CDrom.

This and the following two chapters look in some detail at the achievement in education. This chapter is concerned with the initial thrust to Basque the educational system, starting with the clandestine efforts of the sixties and ending with the first efforts of the newly created Basque Government up to about 1985-86. Topics discussed include a brief history of the fifties, sixties and seventies, the situation in 1976 when the first broad, positive governmental interventions were about to take place, governmental acts in the period leading up to the establishment of the Basque Government and, finally in rather more detail, the initial moves of the Basque Government itself.

4.1. HISTORY OF 50'S, 60'S AND EARLY 70'S

Leaving aside even earlier attempts to establish Basque language teaching and Basque medium schooling, the present set-up has its most obvious antecedents in the first attempts after the 1936-39 Spanish civil war by a small number of Basque speaking parents to provide a mother tongue education for their children. These first, urban rather than rural, initiatives date back to the late fifties or, in most cases, to the sixties. Small groups met in private flats and garages to receive a rudimentary education in Basque, hidden from the eyes of the authorities. As the volume of parents, teachers and children involved increased, strenuous efforts were made by the authorities to suppress these incipient schools, popularly known by the term *ikastola*. Apart from the administrative obstacles created by the Spanish state's Department of Education, such schools faced grave problems at all levels:

- a suitable legal status was hard to come by, though the catholic church provided a solution in a number of cases;
- premises were usually hard to find;
- a degree of dedication, even militancy, was required of the teachers. This meant that those available were often not suitably qualified, not always fully literate in their mother tongue and likely to disappear overnight as a result of clandestine political involvement;
- initially at least, materials were of necessity home-made. Later on, they were duplicated and, subsequently, photocopied. Published materials gradually became available, but difficulties in establishing a suitable standard language style naturally enough continued;



- whatever the founders' intentions some part of the teaching was frequently carried out in Spanish;
- money was always in short supply, being provided primarily by the parents.

The gradual expansion of these *ikastola* schools led to grudging official tolerance, but rarely anything approaching acceptance, even less encouragement. The students were concentrated at the preprimary and primary levels, that is, up to age 14 at that time. The increasing presence of non-native learners and speakers of Basque also meant that the *ikastola* schools had to give consideration to such problems as whether to mix native and non-(native) speakers in a single class, how to introduce children whose home language was predominantly or only Spanish to Basque medium activities. These problems led to a variety of *ad hoc* solutions.

4.2. TURNING POINT: 1976

At the request of the Royal Academy of the Basque Language, the sociolinguistic research company *Siadeco* carried out a broad study on the situation of the Basque language. One of the eight chapters dealt with the teaching of Basque as subject and medium both in the BAC and in Navarre, and calculated medium term requirements. Earlier on, in 1969, a more restricted study had been carried out in Gipuzkoa by another group.

Both studies provided objective data with regard to the state of the education system. They provided significant information on the degree to which Basque, own language of the Basque Country, had been passed over in the educational sphere. They also offered information on the degree of diffusion and intensity of parental attitudes and those of citizens in general in favour of bilingual or Basque language schooling. Amongst other facts gathered, one in particular will serve as evidence of the situation of the Basque language in education. In the 1976-77 school year, 95% of state preprimary and primary school teachers did not know Basque. What was more, a fair number of the few who did were approaching retirement. The situation in private schools was not noticeably better: only a handful had begun, very recently, to include Basque in their plan of studies.

The elimination of Basque from the education system was not merely the action of a repressive régime from the time it prohibited the public use of Basque in 1937. Such treatment went back much further. It is thus hardly surprising that teacher training colleges were designed to produce only Spanish medium teachers.

Only the *ikastola* schools constituted an exception to the general rule described above. They were still clearly a minority at this date, constituting not more than 10% of the school population. The state and private sectors took about half each of the remaining pupils. There were several indicators of dynamism in the *ikastola* schools far above that shown by most schools in the other sectors. The *ikastola* schools were in a phase of rapid growth. They were also innovators in various aspects such as the language ability of teaching staff, teaching practices and the production of textbooks...

To help understand subsequent descriptions a brief explanation of educational organisation is now necessary. Thus, in 1976, the little available nursery care (ages 0-3) was largely in private hands. Little preprimary schooling (ages 3-6) was available, except privately. Children aged between 6-14 attended state, private or *ikastola* schools for compulsory primary schooling. Secondary schooling (ages 14-19) was undergoing rapid expansion. Secondary students had to choose either academic schooling, which was designed primarily as a preparation for university and lasted for four years, or vocational training courses of variable duration in separate schools.

4.3. INTERIM BASQUE GOVERNMENT

When the previous régime was brought to an end and the reformulation of the state was under way, efforts were made from various quarters to establish a formula of bilingual coexistence for citizens in general and for the Basque educational system in particular. As a result there was widespread agreement on the adoption of a bilingual educational system which would partake of the broader task of language normalisation.

Given the strength and the broad base of demands for bilingual schooling formulated by a number of sectors in society the first operative measures were rapidly set in motion. These measures were adopted jointly by the central government and the fledgling Basque institutions. They came into effect even before the elaboration and promulgation of the Statute of Autonomy of the BAC at the end of 1979. It is in this context that one has to situate the Royal Decree 1049/79 of April 20, 1979, subsequently developed by the central government in an order dated August 3, 1979. These two official documents paved the way for a thorough introduction of the Basque language to the educational system of the BAC. At the same time, on the basis of close collaboration between the Ministry of Education of the Basque General Council, predecessor of the present Basque Government, and the University of the Basque Country (still the University of Bilbao at the time) an extensive restructuring programme was carried out in the state owned teacher training colleges. The prime objective of the restructuring process was to ensure appropriate initial training of a proportion of new teachers for Basque language subject and medium classwork. Some private teacher training colleges, including one newly created, were in the forefront of this move to adjust teacher training to the needs of Basque language and medium teaching. At the same time an optional subject, technical or scientific Basque, was introduced in certain university degrees with the aim of ensuring that Basque speakers who might subsequently opt for teaching in secondary schools should acquire an appropriate command of the Basque vocabulary etc. corresponding to their subject.

Finally the Basque Department of Education, in conjunction with the Royal Academy of the Basque Language, set up a Basque Teacher's Diploma. This was designed to act as a minimum standard of language competence and teaching know-how to be required of primary teachers of the Basque language.

Even once these and other initiatives had been adopted, Basque language educational activity in the period preceding the establishment of the Basque Government was extremely precarious. Most of the structural resources necessary to achieve a fully bilingual educational system were unavailable:

- there was a lack of human resources, in particular that of trained Basque speaking teachers;
- there was a lack of material resources;
- there was very limited availability of Basque language school materials;
- organisational tools and economic resources were pitifully limited.

All in all the means available were clearly insufficient to respond adequately to the breadth of demand for bilingual schooling prevalent in the BAC. While Basque speakers constituted only about 25% of the population of the BAC, the proportion of parents desirous of a bilingual education for their offspring was clearly greater. This situation still pertains today, whatever indicator is chosen. That initial period did no more, could do no more, than take the first urgent steps towards the gradual satisfaction of that demand.

4.4. BASQUE GOVERNMENT: THE INITIAL MODEL

The education system of the BAC has basically functioned as a straightforward demand-driven model. The model has always been implicit, never clearly made explicit. This section describes

the features of that initial model. The following chapter will deal with the evolution of the model once the initial thrust of introduction of Basque into the system had passed.

4.4.1. Parental demand

There can be no doubt that even before the parental right to determine the language of education of their offspring was established in detail by law, it was being vigorously exercised by many parents with children of school age. In the first years after the establishment of the Basque Government, public demonstrations to pressure for the satisfaction of parental demand were commonplace. Any failure by the government to satisfy such demand was the subject of instant criticism and renewed pressure. Such failures did occur, probably more from an inability to amass and marshal the required resources in time than from deliberate attempts to avoid satisfying such demand. Supporters of the Basquisition of the education system clearly had the upper hand, though the response and readjustment of the system was inevitably slower than many of them desired.

4.4.2. Definition of Government offer

What was the Government offering? The Department of Education was in a race against time in its attempt to make up the deficit in the Basque language aspect of the educational system, working on a number of fronts at the same time. Four aspects of the government's offer of services will be discussed in this section:

- bilingual teaching models;
- teaching standards;
- curriculum/materials;
- legal basis.

Human and economic resources are discussed in the section 4.4.3.

4.4.2.1. Bilingual teaching models

An early move was the establishment of what are known as the bilingual teaching models. These have proved very resistant to subsequent demands for their change in one direction or another. Using Canadian and Italian sources and at the same time taking into account the diversity of teaching models evolved in the *ikastola* movement, a small group of experts proposed the establishment of four bilingual teaching models. These were rapidly reduced to three.

In the official formulation of the three models quoted in table 4 model **D** appears as primarily directed at native speakers, but the practice of the last ten to fifteen years has been rather different. There is a considerable number of non-native speakers in model **D** streams and they are often numerically dominant in the more castilianised areas. This has meant that such classes are often closer to a certain type of immersion teaching of the second language. Thus, the mother-tongue principle enshrined in the definition of model **D** is only partially relevant at the present time.

According to these definitions, models **A** and **D** are almost symmetrically opposite in their use of the two official languages corresponding in many ways to formulations of school language use to be found worldwide. **B**, on the other hand, includes a broad spread of bilingual experiments in need of special support and evaluation. This third formula is not untried but is certainly less developed round the world than the other two. In the case of the BAC it was designed to be available until the end of primary schooling only (i.e. until age 14 at that time) in the belief that such pupils would be able to transfer to model **D** for their secondary schooling. The introduction of these models was gradual, at first on a voluntary basis, subsequently becoming compulsory ever further up the age scale year after year from 1983-84 onwards once the corresponding legal dispositions had been put in place.

Table 4: Definitions of Bilingual Teaching Models

Model A: Almost all teaching is carried out in Spanish. Basque is taught as a subject.

Language objectives:

- understand Basque well
- be prepared to give basic explanations in Basque on everyday matters
- strengthen positive attitudes towards Basque
- prepare student for participation in Basque environments

Model B: Teaching is carried out half in Spanish and half in Basque. Both languages are thus medium as well as subject. This model is the way for children from Spanish speaking homes to achieve a firmer command of Basque.

Language objectives:

- acquire suitable competence to perform in Basque as well as securing a high level of comprehension
- prepare students to carry out further studies in Basque

Model D: Almost all teaching is carried out in Basque. Spanish is taught as a subject. This model is designed primarily for students from Basque-speaking homes.

Language objectives:

- strengthen competence in Basque, enriching language skills and converting Basque into an instrument of communication for conversation and teaching
- strengthen the community of Basque-speaking students to stand up to the pressures of the Spanish-speaking environment and to make it a driving force in the Basquisition of the inhabitants of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country
- obtain a satisfactory knowledge of Spanish.

The residual classes of the previous Spanish only model were labelled model **X**. At the present time, very few individuals are taught under this model, usually on the basis of individual exemptions on account of temporary residence in the Basque Country or arrival at a late stage of compulsory education. They have never been very numerous and at present constitute less than 1% of the entire volume of pre-university students.

Finally, two or more streams of different bilingual teaching models often coexist within the same school, sharing staff and facilities, contrary to practice in some other bilingual areas. **A** and **D** combinations are rare, but not impossible. From the point of view of increasing the Basqueness of the school atmosphere it would be desirable to keep students from models **B** and **D** separate from model **A** students. However, politicians' fears of creating two separate communities have meant that priority has been given to social integration, at the risk of weakening command of Basque in some cases.

4.4.2.2. Teaching standards

One of the discussion points of the time amongst those involved in the introduction of the newly co-official language into the education system concerned quantity and quality. Very aware of the problems of attaining a high quality Basque language system if the immediate satisfaction of

all parental demands was pursued, some wanted to insist on the maintenance of a high level of requirements to ensure such quality. But the question was largely academic: parental pressure was overwhelming. This led to a system whereby in the face of any shortage of teachers at the beginning of each school year the common response was to lower both the Basque language requirement and the initial teacher training requirement. This, in turn, led naturally enough to a quality problem which has still only been partially overcome. Nevertheless, a number of measures were put into place to assist the teachers without proper initial training or an appropriate level in Basque to reach the minima subsequently established by decree and later by law.

4.4.2.3. Curriculum/materials

The introduction of Basque into teaching on a widespread, official basis brought with it the need to define the curriculum, not only for Basque language and literature, but also for those other subjects such as Geography and History, where a specifically Basque-centered element deserved to be introduced. And, secondly, the materials necessary to teach all subjects in Basque were also urgently required. Whilst the first task was government-led and government-imposed, the elaboration of materials was largely left to private means. However, the government provided some financial support, as will be seen in a later section.

4.4.2.4. Legal basis

Obviously, all these varied activities relating to the Basquisition of the education system required a proper legal basis, if they were not to be subject to continual revision. Various legal measures were taken to provide a proper basis for these activities. Here are the four main steps:

1) Article 3 of the Spanish constitution of 1978 affirms:

1.- Spanish is the official language of the state. All Spaniards have the duty to know it and the right to use it.

2.- The other Spanish languages will also be official in their respective Autonomous Communities in accordance with their Statutes.

And article 148 further stated that:

*1.- The Autonomous Communities can take on responsibilities in the following spheres:
(...)*

17.- The promotion of the culture, research and, where the case arises, teaching in the language of the Autonomous Community.

2) The corresponding statute of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country was passed in 1979. Article 6 declares:

1.- Basque, the language of the Basque people, shall, like Spanish, have the status of an official language in Euskadi. All its inhabitants have the right to know and use both languages.

Article 16 further states that:

In application of the stipulations in the First Additional Measure of the Constitution, responsibility lies with the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country for education in its entirety, regardless of what level, degree, kind or speciality it may be, without prejudice to article 27 of the Constitution and the Organic Laws which are to develop it, or to the powers assigned to the State by article 149.1.30 of the Constitution, or to the inspection necessary for its proper execution and safeguarding.

3) The law for the normalisation of the use of Basque (1982), which develops the above precepts, states in article 15:

The right of all students to be taught either in Basque or Spanish at the different educational levels is recognised. To this effect the parliament and the government will adopt those measures necessary which will tend to the progressive generalisation of

bilingualism in the educational system of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country.

Article 16 continues:

- 1. In pre-university teaching, the teaching of the official language which has not been chosen as the medium of teaching by parents or the tutor, or, if appropriate, the student, will be compulsory.*
- 2. However, the government will regulate the linguistic models to be taught in each school, taking into account the wishes of the parents or the tutors and sociolinguistic situation of the area.*

Subsequent articles are also highly relevant to education:

Article 17. The Government will adopt those measures that will lead to a guarantee of a real possibility, in equality of conditions, of possessing sufficient practical knowledge of Basque at the end of the period of compulsory schooling and that will ensure the official use of Basque, making the same a vehicle of normal expression, both in internal and external activities, and in administrative acts and documents.

Article 18. Plans of study will be adjusted to meet the objectives proposed in articles 15, 16 and 17.

Article 19. The university teacher training colleges will adapt their plans of study to achieve total proficiency of teachers in Basque and Spanish, in accordance with the demands of their specialisation.

Article 20. 1. The government, in order to make the right to receive education in Basque effective, will establish those means which tend toward a progressive Basquisition of the teaching staff.

2. Likewise, it will determine those teaching posts or units for which knowledge of Basque will be obligatory, in order to comply with that which is laid down in articles 15 and 16 of this law.

- 4) The last essential piece of the initial legal base for the Basquisition of the education system is popularly known as the decree of bilingualism, published in July 1983. Although it is too long to be included here in its entirety, its articles provide the detailed legal basis for:
- compulsory Spanish and Basque language classes;
 - the definition and introduction of the bilingual models in all schools;
 - the creation of subsidies for the production of school materials in Basque, so that parents do not suffer financial disadvantage as a result of choosing Basque language studies for their offspring;
 - the establishment of minimum language requirements in order to teach Basque or in Basque;
 - the retraining of teachers so as to be able to teach in Basque.

The four documents quoted have been set out in order of rank. Thus, each one is authorised by its predecessor in a chain going back to the 1978 Spanish constitution. Secondly, these are only the basic texts. Numerous further decrees, orders and decisions relating to the implementation of a bilingual education system also appear in the official gazette of the Basque Government. The interest of this particular set of documents lies in their forming the ultimate legal justification for implementation, filling the legal void that had occurred.

The ultimate motor of the process of change within the educational system is parental choice. The government defines the languages offered as medium just as it also determines the choice of subjects to be offered. Most of its other decisions are concerned with ensuring the satisfaction of that parental demand to an acceptable standard. There was no fundamental change in the legal framework described here until 1993, and a number of its features have survived to the present day.

4.4.3. Government resources

Powers in education were devolved to the Basque Government fairly early on in its existence, with the result that educational expenditure initially constituted a very high proportion of the Basque Government budget, very nearly 50% (1982). As the government has taken on further powers over the years, that proportion has fallen to around 27% (2002), even though the education budget has risen annually in absolute terms (1982: approx. 193 million €; 1986: 389 m. €; 1995: 1,116 m. €; 2002: 1,610.71 m. €).

4.4.3.1. Human resources

The principal problem resulting from a change of official language in an education system seems almost invariably to be a shortage of teachers capable of working in the new school language. The BAC was no exception in this respect. The training aspect of the problem was attacked from several different directions.

Firstly, initial training for primary school teachers was now being provided in Basque in both private and state teacher training colleges, alongside Spanish speaking groups in most cases. There was little variation in the preparation of secondary school teachers, however. Even those studying Basque language and literature continued to carry out at least a part of their university studies in Spanish.

Secondly, those who had carried out their training in Spanish had the opportunity of sitting the general Basque language examination *EGA* or equivalent. If they passed they were accepted for both Basque subject and medium teaching at the primary level. If they also passed their teaching subject related *EIT* oral exam, they were accepted to teach their degree subject or related subjects at the secondary level.

Finally, in order to bring teachers up to the level required by those examinations an ever-expanding in-service retraining system known as *IRALE* was set up for practising teachers. *IRALE* grants in principle cover the full cost of part-time language training. Continuance of the full grant depends on the degree of the individual teacher's attendance and achievement. In addition, a growing number of teachers have been offered part or full-time release from teaching duties on full salary for periods which have been increased over the years from an initial three months to up to two to three school years. These opportunities are offered to both state and, to a lesser degree, private school teachers. The state pays for both the learner's tuition and the corresponding supply teacher. These opportunities are offered irrespective of mother tongue, though the release period for native speakers of Basque has always been shorter than that for non natives. These native speakers often have a limited command of the written language and very varied degrees of competence in the spoken language. A number of different types of course are offered. At the lower levels these are taught both by state-owned and private language schools. The Department's own few centres, including a residential centre in the first few years of *IRALE*'s existence, usually cater for the more advanced students.

The language requirement ultimately to be attained was the same as that for the second group mentioned above: *EGA* (plus *EIT*, in the case of secondary school teachers). However, there was an alternative temporary arrangement: *IGA*, whereby teachers who had undergone training by *IRALE* and had passed the appropriate internal examination were licensed to commence teaching Basque or through the medium of Basque for a maximum of five years. During that period they had to obtain *EGA* or a recognised equivalent and, if appropriate, *EIT*. Such teachers could not opt for a Basque language post with tenure until they had achieved that level. The object of such a system was two-fold. On the one hand, there was a very real concern in the Department of Education that excessive rigidity in the sphere of teacher language certification would lead to a teacher shortage. It was feared this would in turn lead to undesired confrontation with parents. On the other hand, it seemed good practice to recognise that language classes can

only do so much to aid the learner of the language. At some point, learners have to confront their future working environment. And if that environment is sufficiently supportive, the language learning process should reach its culmination.

To carry out the *IRALE* programme in its own centres and to effect an appropriate follow-up of the progress of its students both while studying in other organisations collaborating with the department and, subsequently, on their return to school, the department set up a team of teachers to specialise in the language retraining of other teachers. Most of the team has been engaged in teaching, but some have fulfilled other functions as head-teacher, director of studies, material writer, examination setter, post-course advisor or supply teacher.

Other groups of personnel have also been created as a direct or indirect result of the introduction of Basque in the education system. Obviously, the most numerous group was that of teachers qualified to teach in Basque. While part of this group already formed part of the personnel of either state, *ikastola* or private school networks, a good number first entered employment in order to take up a Basque speaking post and, as such, represented new personnel. In addition, where state primary school model **A** class tutors were unable to provide Basque language lessons through lack of knowledge of the language, the department provided an extra teacher responsible for teaching Basque in several different classes. At another level, it was clear that the widespread introduction of a new subject, Basque, into the curriculum, required considerable coordination, to ensure a proper exchange of information, ideas and materials between schools, and between schools and the department. As a result, the department named a series of area language coordinators by language model to carry out the necessary coordination.

The department's administrative services were also directly involved in the Basquisition process. The proportion of Basque speakers at headquarters was as high as 75% in the early years of the department. At the time of writing around 65% of headquarter staff are Basque speakers of varying degrees of competence, though many rarely do any written work in Basque. The situation in the three branch offices varies from province to province.

4.4.3.2. Financial arrangements

How much does it all cost? Or, more precisely, as opponents of bilingual systems of education tend to be quick to ask, what extra expense has the government incurred as a result of this bilingual system? Of course, there are specific extra costs which will be listed in this section, but it should not be forgotten that a monolingual system imposed on a vibrant bilingual community has its own hidden costs in individual frustration, degraded self-images, collective anger, political confrontation and wasted talent, even if such costs are not usually included in the financial balance-sheet of an education system.

Funding mechanisms have changed over time. By the end of the Franco régime *ikastola* schools were entirely funded by the parents; state schools entirely supported by central government (Madrid) funding; and private schools substantially funded by central government, with parents paying very varied additional sums. Some limited financial support was provided by central government to *ikastola* schools after Franco's death.

With the devolution of responsibility in education on the BAC authorities, the Basque Government ended up fully funding all state schools on its territory. It also provided a high proportion of funding for private and *ikastola* schools, with some limited additional support initially to private schools to assist in the introduction of initially **A** and subsequently **B** and **D** streams. Such special support for Basque language streams has now disappeared.

With regard to the introduction of Basque in the school system, there has been and still is considerable further indirect financing, as is only to be expected in a system that was starting virtually from scratch. Thus,

- in addition to the tuition fees mentioned above, the government pays for supply teachers to replace Spanish-speaking civil servant teachers in state schools while the latter receive in-service training in Basque;
- it also pays private schools about 70-80% of the cost of such temporary teachers for a maximum of two years per retrainee;
- Basque school materials production (printed matter, audio/video materials, computer software) is also subsidised in order to satisfy the legal mandate (1983 decree of bilingualism) that parents should incur no additional expense as a result of opting for education for their children in the minority language. For details see section 5.3.2.;
- the government also contributes, usually via other departments, to various projects related to providing the necessary infrastructure for corpus planning (e.g. linguistic research, dictionary-making...): such initiatives are sometimes directly relevant to schools;
- finally, a certain amount of departmental money is also spent on a rather heterogeneous collection of activities all aimed directly or indirectly at a more complete Basquisition of the school environment under the programme NOLEGA. For details see section 5.3.2.;
- The Department of Education has at times made limited provision for the Basquisition of private school non-teaching staff.

Another government department provides some money for Basquisition of non-teaching state school staff. The councils of the three provinces constituting the BAC and some town councils also contribute financially to activities along the lines of those promoted by *NOLEGA*.

[Return to table of contents](#)

5. EDUCATION (II): EVOLUTION TO THE PRESENT

In the preceding chapter the initial model of bilingual education was described in terms of parental demand, of governmental (re-)definition of its offer of schooling in bilingual terms and of the resources provided by government in accordance with its offer to satisfy the demand. That initial model has obviously undergone changes over the years in all three elements. Government education policies have not been totally homogeneous, particularly in regard to language policy. Three different parties held the education portfolio from the creation of the first government in 1981 to 2002 and there were eight different ministers in the same period. But the fundamental change has come from other quarters. With parental demand largely satisfied parents ceased to be major protagonists. A marked fall in school rolls has sparked off a general concern among teachers over job security. At the same time, monolingual Spanish speaking teachers unable or unwilling to learn to work in Basque have exercised increasing pressure on successive governments, largely through the trade unions, to halt what they regard as encroachments on their rights. The education system itself has undergone major reorganisation. These pressures mean that elements whose existence was not recognised in the model outlined above have now come into their own. They will be discussed under the same three basic headings as in the previous chapter: parental demand, governmental offer and resources provided.

5.1. PARENTAL DEMAND

Three aspects of parental demand are discussed in the following paragraphs:

- how demographic change has affected demand;
- how there have been various efforts from different quarters to influence that demand in the direction of one or another bilingual teaching model;
- and, finally, a review of the factors underlying the consistent strength of parental demand for Basque medium education.

5.1.1. Demographic change

The very first fact to be borne in mind is the rapid fall in the number of births (figure 3) from 1976 onwards, which is only now showing signs of bottoming out. The fall in the birth rate in the BAC, paralleled in greater or lesser degree throughout Spain, occurred much later and more rapidly than in the rest of western Europe, except Ireland. A number of possible factors can be mentioned:

- a change in mentality, connected with ongoing urbanisation and increasing material well-being. In the small villages where many older people had known a period of desperate poverty after the 1936-39 civil war, where hard work and long hours seemed vital to survival, where, according to the still widely heeded catholic church, children were a blessing, children were rapidly transformed into useful hands about the farm. In the towns, on the other hand, children have often come to be viewed as expensive drawbacks to a hedonistic life-style. In the modern urban setting many (potential) parents have experienced a new situation of plenty. Wives are increasingly enjoying careers of their own. New opportunities for enjoyment have arisen due to the spread of the private car, the arrival of television, video and, more recently, the computer, the possibility of holidays abroad, the opportunity to take part in very varied cultural activities and to obtain further education. The catholic church has clearly lost its ideological grip;
- the oil crises of the seventies and eighties and the ensuing economic recession hit Spain, with few energy resources of its own, particularly hard: widespread unemployment was one result;

- finally, the end of the Franco régime brought with it greater availability of a range of contraceptive methods and the support of the health services to assist in their proper use.

Whatever the causes the final result is clear: annual births are now running at less than 40% of their 1976 figures. The effect on the educational system is of necessity serious. Total rolls have fallen continuously since the 1983-84 school year (figure 4). It is clear that they will continue to fall for several years yet, unless there is a major change in the birth rate. There is no indication that this is likely to happen.

Figure 3: Live births in the BAC

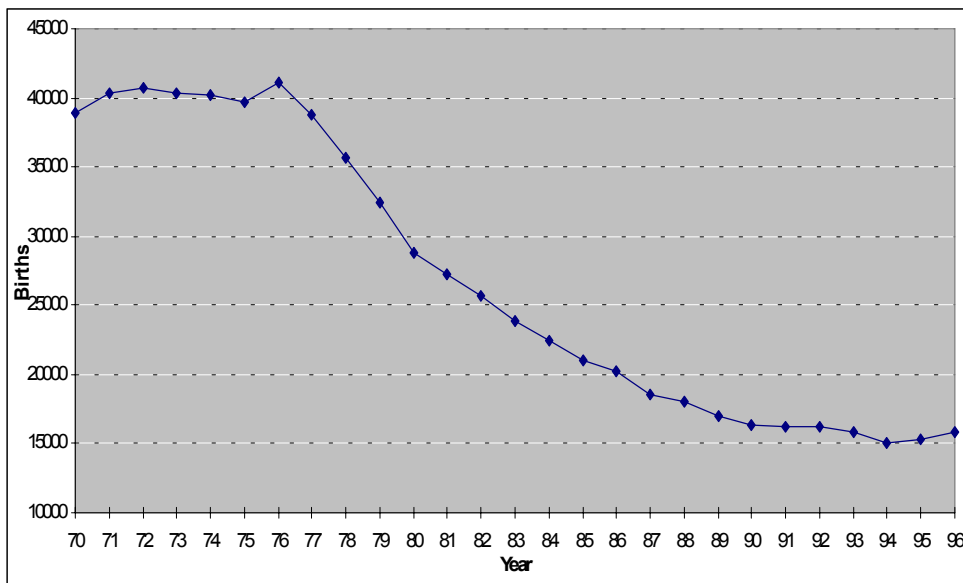
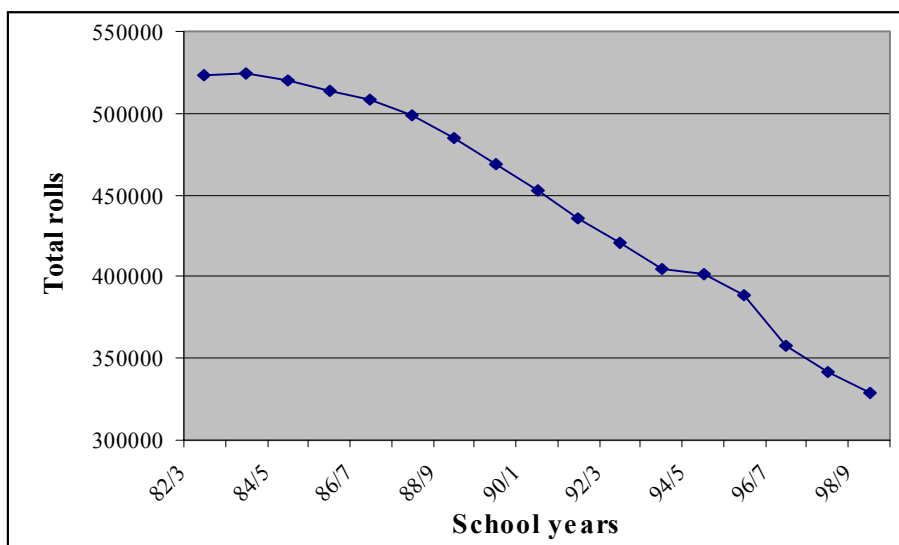


Figure 4: Total rolls



5.1.2. Forces attempting to mould parental demand

The first years of regional government were marked by the continuing effort to satisfy an ever-expanding parental demand. As time went on different entities tried directly to influence that parental demand. On the part of some Basque language loyalist organisations annual campaigns have been organised to persuade parents about to enrol their children for the first time to choose models **D** or **B**, in the belief, based on empirical evidence, that these models ensure greater competence in Basque in the long run. In many areas model **A** schools are increasingly battling for survival. In an attempt to attract a greater proportion of schoolchildren they have emphasised the mother tongue argument, that is, the appropriateness of an education primarily in Spanish for children who are native Spanish speakers. In addition, such schools often go out of the way to provide extra services, such as school meals, a computer room, modern language teachers etc. Private *ikastola* schools have developed a prize-winning curriculum which includes a very early introduction to English. This option has proved attractive to many parents. The competition between schools to enrol children is becoming fiercer by the year and accusations are levelled by many. There seems little doubt that, in their enthusiasm to secure a satisfactory number of new entrants, some schools have occasionally provided plainly biased information on the models to parents. Accusations have also been levelled at the Department of Education's provincial offices. The department itself, however, has never carried out formal campaigns to promote any model in particular, though it has occasionally tried to provide a minimum of written information on all.

5.1.3. Strength of parental demand

Perhaps the most notable feature of the evolution of parental demand over the past fifteen years has been its continued and growing pull towards the Basque-er of the bilingual teaching models. In 1981 the department expected a rapid expansion in models **B** and **D**, simply because there was no longer to be any artificial restriction on their growth. They were jointly expected to grow to well over a quarter of the population, thus including both native speakers and the children of those non-native parents who also valued a Basque language education for their offspring. What was unexpected was that demand would continue to grow year by year and that it would increasingly tend towards model **D** rather than model **B**. The reasons for this are not clear, but the following factors are likely to have influenced parental choice:

- some parents are Basque speaking. To the degree they are not influenced by the now much weakened tradition of despising the mother tongue, they desire to have their own children educated in Basque;
- some Spanish speaking parents have no doubt chosen the Basque-er models for ideological reasons: they regard Basque as the language of the Basques and wish to ensure that the language they were prohibited from learning, pressured into not learning or simply not given the opportunity to learn should be available to their offspring;
- such parents and others are probably also influenced by the widespread belief that a command of Basque will make entry into the labour market easier in a time of high employment. As can be seen elsewhere in this document, this belief has only moderate justification in reality;
- model **A** and, later on, model **B** have become relatively discredited as a route to mastery of Basque amongst many such parents. From very early on, many regarded model **A** as a sop to anti-Basque language sentiment. Research work also confirmed that it was noticeably less efficient in the production of Basque speakers than the other two models. At a later date, the perception that the support provided by the government to the more experimental model **B** (see 5.2.2. in particular) was not always as wholehearted as might be desirable has also provoked a certain parental movement towards model **D**;
- research has repeatedly justified public perception of **D** as the most efficient in linguistic results. It seems to ensure the greatest knowledge of Basque among the three

models, without loss to competence in Spanish. However, as most native speakers attend this model, it is not clear what part of the result is due to schooling and what part to the home.

Private schools were not impervious to the changes in parental demand. Initial introduction of the Basque-er teaching models was much slower than in the public sector, if a few religious orders particularly active in the use of Basque are excepted. But as parental demand became clearer, more and more have introduced models **B** and **D** in an attempt to maintain or even increase their share of the market.

Finally, it must be pointed out that demand for the three models is subject to considerable variation by age of student, province and school network. As a crude summary one could say that initially model **B** was dominantly a state school affair, model **D** was characteristic of the *ikastola* schools and model **A** reigned supreme in the private sector. The picture today is clearly more complex. By province too there are notable differences. Model **A** has virtually disappeared in the public sector in Gipuzkoa, which has far and away the Basque-est school system of the three provinces. It is weak in the private sector there, while it still maintains a certain strength in Araba. Not surprisingly, these provincial differences correspond to the relative strength of the language in each. Occasionally the department has distorted the market slightly by pressure in one direction or another, for example, by refusing to let private schools open Basque-er streams or by trying to reduce the number of Basque speaking teachers in state model **B** streams.

5.2. DEFINITION OF GOVERNMENT OFFER

The Basque Government's schooling provision has inevitably varied over the past twenty years with different effects on the bilingual education offer. On the whole, the Basque Government satisfies the vast majority of parental demands with regard to language models, though difficulties do arise where the number of parents requiring education in a particular model for their children do not reach minimum numbers. This is true whatever the model.

For the purposes of presentation changes in the government's offer have been grouped in four blocks:

- those due to the state government exercising its powers as regards education;
- initiatives to redefine the models;
- changes in the school networks;
- a miscellany of other changes.

5.2.1. State-wide changes

The state government has retained a number of powers in the educational sphere primarily related to the basic configuration of the system, in particular, minimum length of compulsory schooling, definition of primary and secondary schooling, minimum duration of Spanish language lessons and the use of about 55% of school hours.

The most important change with regard to Basque language models has without doubt been due to the reform of the structure of primary and secondary schooling. Under the changes, preprimary schooling now lasts for six years from age 0 to 6, primary schooling lasts for a further six years until age 12 and secondary education lasts in most cases for six years up to about age 18. Secondary education is further subdivided into compulsory (up to age 16) and optional (the following two years). The new system has been fully functioning since about the year 2000. These changes have allowed the Basque Government to extend the model **B** option throughout compulsory secondary schooling up to age 16. The argument behind this upward extension of model **B** is that weaker students find it difficult to transfer to model **D** for their

secondary schooling particularly as there are some subjects where they have never previously used Basque. Rather than see them lose altogether the possibility of being taught in the medium of Basque as a result of transferring to model **A**, the department has decided to extend the opportunity to study in model **B**, in application of the 1993 law of Basque state schooling, which does not impose age-limits on the use of any model.

The concomitant changes in the curriculum have also created the need for a thorough revision so as to ensure that the Basque dimension (both linguistic and cultural) is properly represented throughout. The topic is at present under study.

5.2.2. Attempts to redefine the bilingual models

There have been a number of initiatives over the years to bring about changes in the models. Some have involved proposals of outright abolition. Others have simply involved attempts at redefinition. Especially in Gipuzkoa, proposals have included the abolition of model **A** on the grounds that it does not achieve its aim with regard to Basque language competence. The re-introduction of model **X** (i.e. Spanish as a medium, Basque not even as subject) has been proposed for the province of Araba by those politically opposed to what they consider an unjustifiable extension in teaching and use of the Basque language. The government has rejected both these requests as being contrary to the current language laws.

Attempts have also been made on various occasions to take measures to improve the Basque language results in model **A**. One way in which this could be done would be to permit the introduction of Basque as medium in one or two subjects. At departmental level steps in this direction in primary schools have been discussed and later abandoned on more than one occasion. In secondary education, however, some public secondary schools do offer a reinforced model **A** of this sort. The present system of models has received criticisms for what some consider its rigidity, but no satisfactory alternative has as yet arisen.

Another long-lasting source of debate has been how to staff model **B** streams. Can they make do with half the teachers competent to teach in Basque or should a higher proportion be capable of doing so? In the first few years of *IRALE*'s existence when participation in full time release courses was primarily a function of interest on the part of the individual teacher, many additional teachers in model **B** qualified to teach in Basque. The result was that although a departmental order was made in 1986 stipulating that just half of model **B** staff needed to be qualified in Basque, the actual proportion in many Basque state schools was already higher. When the department decided to apply the measure with greater rigidity at a later date, in an attempt to ensure more posts for Spanish speakers, quite a number of parents expressed their interest in moving their children into model **D**, often with the acquiescence of the school. The result was that whole classes changed from model **B** to **D** to ensure that those classes continued to have a wholly or almost wholly Basque speaking staff.

In an era when the tendency seems to be to allow state schools greater autonomy than before a final discussion point is who should decide which schools should offer what models. Some have advocated that each state school should be able to define its language offer, much as happens in the private sector, instead of the department carrying out centralised planning. Such an option might not necessarily be the best. As teachers tend to have considerable influence in school community decisions, there is no guarantee that in such circumstances parents' interests would be fully protected, particularly where the interests of teachers are notably at variance with those of parents. In any case the present legal formulation precludes such a change.

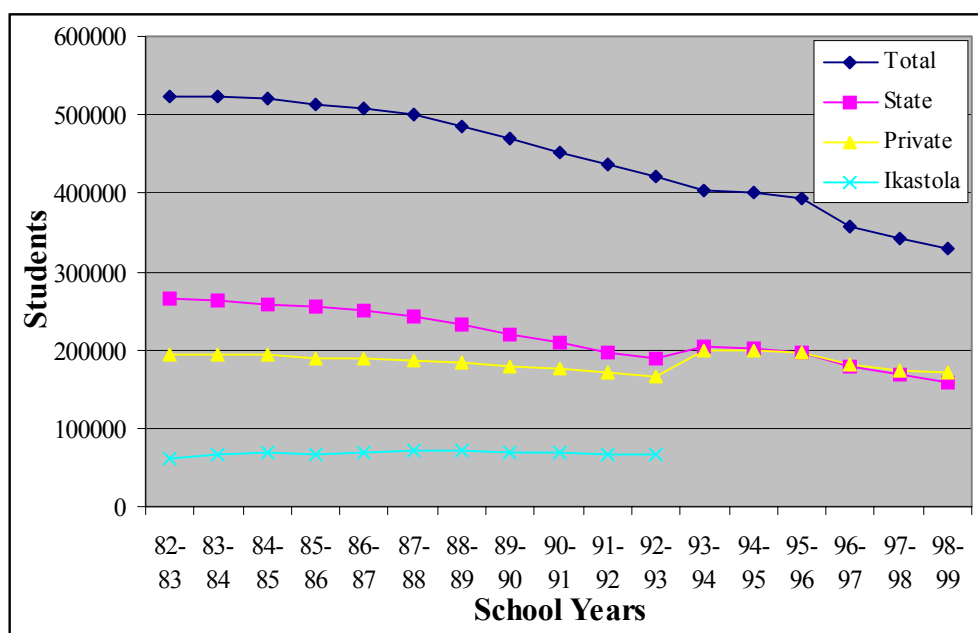
5.2.3. Changes in the school networks

By 1976 there were three school networks in the BAC: a public sector, a private sector and an *ikastola* sector. The *ikastola* sector was legally private but often portrayed itself as playing a

public role, particularly in the face of the failure of the public sector to respond to parental demand for teaching of and in Basque. From then on, however, the public sector became increasingly responsive to that demand. The private sector too began to respond. The result was that the definition of the specific role that the *ikastola* schools had taken on became blurred.

Politicians came to an agreement to put an end to the separate *ikastola* network. The consequence of that political decision was reflected in the passing of the 1993 BAC law of Basque state schooling. Amongst other things, the schools in the *ikastola* sector had to decide whether to enter the public or private sectors, with about 65% opting for the private sector if one leaves a few marginal cases out of the calculation. In terms of pupils, close on three times as many ended up in the private sector as compared to state schools. Financial viability seems to have been the main factor determining choice, with smaller, weaker schools on the whole integrating in the state system. Thus, *ikastola* schools no longer legally constitute a separate school network, though the name and, in many cases, a rather Basque-er atmosphere than in the general run of state and private schools still survive. In particular, model **A** is only exceptionally present in such schools, while model **B** streams nearly always have well over the required minimum of Basque speaking teachers. Moreover, the *ikastola* coordinating body has also survived the changes and is promoting the *ikastola* group as such within the private sector. In particular, it continues to organise five annual sponsored walks, one for each of the four provinces in the peninsular Basque Country and a further one in the continental part of the country. These help to provide a certain amount of additional funding and are noticeable for their ability to attract mass participation. Participants in these one-day events are usually numbered in tens of thousands. These changes have made the private sector considerably Basque-er than previously, in the sense of having a greater proportion of children in models **B** and **D** and a greater proportion of teachers qualified to teach in Basque than ever before.

Figure 5: Percentage shares of primary and secondary pupils by school network



At the time of the passing of the law of Basque state schooling several political parties also came to an agreement that the distribution of children between the state and private sectors

should be maintained. No operative measures were adopted and, indeed, with the Spanish constitution, which clearly allows parental choice in the matter, it is hard to see what measures could be adopted. By 1993 the public sector had already lost a considerable volume of students. Since 1993 the distribution of successive age cohorts between private and public sectors has been relatively stable, roughly half and half. Nevertheless, a slight increase can be discerned in the percentage of private sector pupils.

5.2.4. Other changes

There have been a number of other changes in the education system:

- the expansion in the age range catered for by the state school system, now ages 2 to 19;
- the rise, at certain ages, in the percentage of students of each age cohort receiving full-time education;
- the increase in para-educational state services such as teachers' centres, a curriculum design/educational evaluation centre and various types of additional expertise (support teachers for special needs pupils, educational psychologists and consultants etc...);
- the introduction of new types or the expansion of previously existing types of state teaching (official language schools, schools of music);
- a considerable expansion in the offer of part-time and full-time in-service training for teachers.

These initiatives have merits in themselves, but one additional motive seems to have been that of increasing employment prospects for monolingual Spanish teachers. As such services are in any case open to users of both languages, many of them also help to increase the number of posts available to Basque speakers.

5.3. GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

Some of the changes in the deployment of departmental resources have already been hinted at in the previous paragraphs. These will now be looked at in slightly greater detail. The areas to be considered are:

- changes in training;
- new types of materials and support;
- and further details on the financing of schools.

5.3.1. Changes in training

5.3.1.1. Change in training emphasis

The first and foremost point to be made about teacher training is the displacement of interest from initial to in-service training. From the foregoing the reason is immediately obvious: with the number of new children entering the system each year on the decrease and with most teachers still many years from retirement (the average age of state teachers with tenure at the end of 1997 was 43), the prospect of permanent new job openings in the public and private sectors is becoming increasingly remote. Taking into account the rigidity of the public sector labour market and the unwillingness of successive governments to antagonise teachers by jeopardising jobs, the expansion of *IRALE* to prepare teachers to meet the continuing parental demand for qualified Basque medium teachers and the relative loss of importance of the teacher training colleges in this respect was a foregone conclusion. The *IRALE* programme has been notable for its almost annual growth. Another programme for teachers, *ZULEI*, combines morning secretarial assistance to the headteacher and afternoon language learning facilities. One teacher training college has closed, the number of students in initial training has dropped and the

colleges are searching for a new role, experimenting as in-service trainers amongst other functions.

A more recent trend is the increasing offer of in-service training with full-time release for three months to teachers who are already certified to teach Basque and are currently doing so, but who lack up-to-date information on recent advances in corpus planning for Basque.

5.3.1.2. Change in certification objectives

Changes in Basque language certification objectives for teachers are also worthy of mention, as they have given continuing cause for concern since their introduction in 1993. The old *IGA/EGA* (+ *EIT*) system (see 4.4.3.1.) was criticised for various reasons. But though many were interested in reforming the educational language profile system in existence at the time, their objectives were not always easily made compatible.

In brief, the result of the changes was as follows. *IGA* was abolished. A teacher would henceforward obtain certification once and for all, preferably at the end of the training period. A new attainment level, *HE2*, the second language profile, was introduced to substitute *EGA* (+*EIT*) as the requirement for Basque-medium state school teachers. Its design tried to take the communicative tradition of language teaching into account, paying attention to the special purposes of teachers according to subject. Distinctions were made between open examinations for candidates not having participated in full-time release training through *IRALE* and examinations restricted to candidates presented by *IRALE*. The latter type of examination now includes an element of continuous assessment.

As a result, prospective teachers were annoyed at having to sit two examinations in order to be able to apply for jobs in both public and private sectors. And many teacher trainees and some University students who are awarded *EGA* on the basis of their university performance were unable to apply for public sector posts without sitting a further examination. In short, the 1983 landmark of *EGA* as a minimum level for all teachers was done away with for teachers in retraining. The department has put considerable effort into restoring the former coherence of the language profile system. As a result, early in 1998 *EGA* was once again accepted as an equivalent of the second language profile. The original system prevails in the private sector and, in addition, the second language profile has since early 1996 also been accepted there as an equivalent of *EGA*.

A further, lower level, *HE1* was also created. This first language profile certifies that the teacher has a level sufficient to participate in Basque language school life, but insufficient to teach Basque medium classes. It is now theoretically required of all state teachers not required to attain the second profile, but a complex system of dates of compliance, age limits and other exemptions means that it will barely be operative for another generation.

5.3.1.3. Other in-service training

There has been considerable expansion in the offer of in-service training on topics other than Basque language training. As far as the promotion of a Basque speaking teaching staff is concerned, the provision must partly be regarded as a lost opportunity. Only a modest proportion of the courses are offered in Basque.

5.3.2. New types of materials and support

The *EIMA* programme to subsidise the publication of school materials in Basque was initially designed only for printed materials (*EIMA I*). The programme was subsequently expanded to include the publication of audio and audiovisual materials (*EIMA II*) and of educational software (*EIMA III*). More recently, a new line of grants for work-groups preparing materials



has been set up (*EIMA IV*). These are usually composed mainly of teachers. The subsidy for an individual piece of material depends on a number of criteria: expected sales, price, degree of originality, government priorities and the number of applicants in a given call are among those considered. Before final payment of the subsidy the material in question is checked for quality of language, for conformity of subject matter to the official curriculum and, in the case of non-printed materials, quality of production. The procedure in *EIMA III* is somewhat different in that in return for the grant the government receives fifty odd copies of the software which it then distributes to teacher support centres. In order to promote excellence in school materials production, annual awards are made by the department to the publishing houses and audiovisual producers responsible for the best materials. The department also publishes regularly updated catalogues so that schools are fully informed of available materials.

The programme to promote the Basquisition of school atmosphere (*NOLEGA*) has extended a great deal over the past few years. Present activities include:

- short stay residential centres for some primary and the first two years of compulsory secondary school age learners of Basque;
- grants to schools to promote theatre, choral singing, the performance of sung verse in the traditional style;
- visits by authors to schools;
- use of Basque language feature films in teaching activities;
- other extra-curricular and out of school activities, including grants to school groups attending non-governmental short stay residential centres, as well as exchanges between schools from different sociolinguistic areas aimed at increasing the use of Basque among pupils;
- annual prize contests for prose, poetry and elocution with substantial prizes;
- courses to train teachers to prepare scenery and teach drama, spontaneous sung verse and elocution;
- bilingual signage of state schools, including standardisation of vocabulary and production of the corresponding handbook;
- promotion of the normalisation of the use of the Basque language within schools. Where the school community chooses to participate in this programme a specific teacher is made responsible for overall coordination and promotion of the use of Basque. A team of area coordinators provide support and guidelines to that teacher. In compensation his or her class-load is reduced. See Aldekoa & Gardner for further details;
- a dictionary of administrative terms for education in both languages.

This very varied group of activities mobilises large numbers of schoolchildren and their teachers and does not a little to endow Basque language activities with a reward system of their own. However the reward system is very weak in comparison to that connected with Spanish. A number of town councils and private agencies have also made considerable efforts along similar lines.

5.3.3. Financial arrangements

Present day arrangements for all sectors are detailed below. It must be emphasized that teacher per class and students per class ratios are in constant flux. The general tendency is to an increasing number of teachers per class and a falling number of students. It should be underlined that schools in the BAC receive no direct extra financial support for teaching Basque or in Basque, save the minor exceptions mentioned below. There is however considerable indirect financing: *IRALE* (see 5.3.1.1.) had a budget of over thirty million € for 1997. The value of the *EIMA* (see 5.3.2.) subsidies in 1998 was:



Table 5: EIMA subsidies - 1998

	Thousand €
Printed materials	674
Audiovisuals	329
Software/CD-rom	200

In addition to these amounts, another 167,000 € approx. were set aside in 1998 to subsidise materials writers, often teachers. Finally, in the belief that excellence should be promoted, substantial prizes (32,000 € approx.) are awarded each year to the publishing houses and production companies for materials considered outstanding by an independent tribunal. *NOLEGA* (see 5.3.2.) also manages a substantial annual budget: the cumulative budget for all its activities in both Primary and Secondary schools in 1998 amounted to around 1,743,000 €.

5.3.3.1. State schools

State primary schools are generally built on land provided for the purpose by the corresponding local council. Once built, the school is handed back to the local council which usually undertakes the cleaning and, sometimes, minor maintenance. The salaries of teachers and non-teaching staff are paid directly to the people involved by the Department. It provides a sum for running costs to the school. Until recently, however, all major repair work was contracted and equipment provided by the Department. At present, however, school financial autonomy has been increased by expanding the budget and permitting head teachers to contract services and make purchases without prior authorisation for sums of up to 12,000 € approx. per contract or purchase per year. Present rules are as follows:

- schools cannot incur debts;
- money accruing in one financial year can be carried over to the following year. Previously this had to be returned to the government of the BAC;
- schools are partly funded by the Basque Government under a system which takes into account a number of factors: a basic module, payable to all schools; number of students; number of m²; number of m³ (for e.g. heating); lift maintenance (if any); other special factors argued by each school. Such money is intended for both running costs and minor capital expenditure but not salaries or major building projects, both directly paid for by the Department;
- money received from the government for running costs may be used on equipment and other minor capital expenditure and *vice versa*;
- headteachers can contract services or goods of up to 12,000 € approx. in value per contract per year. Contracts over that value have to be submitted to tender by the government of the BAC, even though it is the school that will finally pay;
- some schools, in particular vocational training schools wishing to purchase machinery, seek further finance from other, often public, bodies for particular projects. Such finance constituted about 20% of total school income in 1996;
- some schools also receive money as a result of additional services offered, for example, charges made to parents for school lunches;
- any money received from enrolment fees etc. goes directly to the BAC treasury and cannot be used by the school;
- the school may use any financial income generated by bank account interest etc.;
- the school may receive further income from the government on account of its involvement in specific projects for teacher retraining etc.;
- the school may also receive money destined to be passed on in the form of grants to students;

- annual returns have to be made to the government of the BAC;
- centralised buying by the Department of Education on behalf of all schools is now generally avoided.

The only specific cost of bilingualism contemplated initially was the payment of an extra teacher for every five primary classrooms in model A to provide Basque subject teaching where the post-holder was unable to do so. The rise in teacher per class ratios has done away with the need for extra payment. Thus, at the present time schools with the full range of nine preprimary and primary classes have a basic staff of 12 teachers. In model A streams at least two of these are qualified to teach Basque. The minimum number of students in preprimary and primary levels is at present normally 13, and the maximum 25. Lower levels apply in special cases, for example, different age-groups banded together, Special Education... The limits are higher in secondary schools.

5.3.3.2. Private schools

Private schools are in most cases owned by religious orders of the Roman Catholic church. Practically all of them are now partly or fully funded by the Basque Government, with the government imposing strict limits on additional 'hidden' costs such as extra-curricular activities, school meals, transport. Concepts included in the funding to private schools include: salaries of teaching and non-teaching staff, maintenance costs, running costs and necessary repairs to existing premises. No money is made available to cover capital expenditure on new building. A more recent introduction throughout the Spanish state has been that of 'direct' payment of salaries. As a result, the Basque Government now pays well over 50% of private school teachers working in its territory directly out of the grant due to their school, on behalf of the employer-owners of the school. A further specific programme of additional payments is under way to bring private sector teachers' salaries up to 95% of those of state school teachers.

The grant awarded to each school is decided on the basis of a basic quantity per authorised class-group with at least a given quota of pupils. At present the minimum usually applied is 15 in primary and preprimary and 20 in secondary schools. The maximum group size is 25 in the former, 35 in the latter, though larger groups were authorised in the past. Special lower minima apply in classes for the handicapped, or where a seriously handicapped individual is integrated into an ordinary class or, finally, where, say in a rural area, two or even three consecutive school years have been banded together in a single class. Payment is made irrespective of the language model of the class. As far as teachers' salaries are concerned, the payment (1999) per group covers the cost of 1.12 teachers in preprimary, 1.2 in primary, 1.7 in the last two years of compulsory secondary, 1.74 in the baccalaureate and 1.5 for all others. The only extra cost initially included as far as bilingualism was concerned was the payment for an extra teacher per five Primary model A groups. The teacher's task was to teach Basque as a subject in the five corresponding classes. Groups with Basque speaking tutors able to teach Basque in their own classes were not included in the count. As in the public sector, teacher per class ratios have risen with time. Specific extra payments are now no longer necessary as the necessary Basque speaking teachers are deemed to be included in the basic staffing level.

The payment is usually designed to cover 100% of the costs for schooling from age 3 up to the end of compulsory schooling at 16. Other types of schooling are usually supported to an amount falling roughly between 40% and 75% of those costs. In such cases the private schools are entitled to recoup the remaining part through fees to the students.

5.3.3.3. *Ikastola* schools

With regard to *ikastola* schools, the financial arrangements were very similar to those pertaining at the time for private schools. In the approximately four years prior to the passing of the 1993 Law, however, such schools received considerable extra financing aimed at setting them

roughly on a par financially with state schools. Thus, compared with private schools they received extra finance under the following headings: personnel costs, running costs, maintenance, outstanding capital debt. By mid 1993 all had to choose between public and private sectors. Those choosing the public sector had most of their accumulated debt taken over by the department and are now subject to the ordinary parameters for financing in the state sector. Those choosing the private sector were still responsible for any accumulated debt, though this has subsequently been condoned. The alternative might well have involved closure of some of the schools concerned. They now receive somewhat greater government finance than other private schools. In particular, an additional sum is paid to ensure the maintenance of salary levels where these were higher than those obtaining in private schools at the time of opting, until such time as private school teacher salaries ‘catch up’. Direct comparison with private school funding is difficult, due to the complexity of the *ikastola* teacher per class ratio system, individually calculated for each school and educational level at the time of opting for the private sector. The department’s aim was to equal out the ratios throughout the private sector by 1997. It should be noted that the *ikastola* schools have frequently clashed with the government on account of their dissatisfaction with the financial arrangements. Moreover, it is clear that the main beneficiaries of other sorts of government aid to the private sector are non-*ikastola* schools. This includes support for schools on the verge of closing and payments of about 3,810,000 € in 1997-98 school year for Basquisition of staff.

5.4. DEPARTMENT SUCCESSES AND WEAKNESSES

How far has all this activity been successful in satisfying popular demand? How far has the department really achieved a fully bilingual system? On the positive side a glance at the distribution of students by bilingual teaching model and class level suggests that the face of the education system of the BAC has been completely transformed in the past 15 years, building on earlier attempts by the *ikastola* schools to establish a system which would properly attend to the needs of children requiring a Basque medium education. Figures 6, 7 and 8 give a breakdown of students enrolled by model, comparing the 1982-83 and 1998-99 school years.

Figure 6: Distribution of students in education system in figures

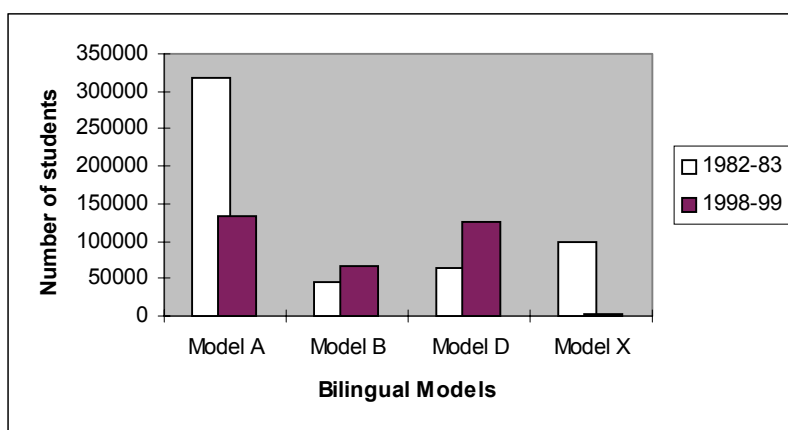


Figure 7: Percentage distribution of students in education system, 1982-83

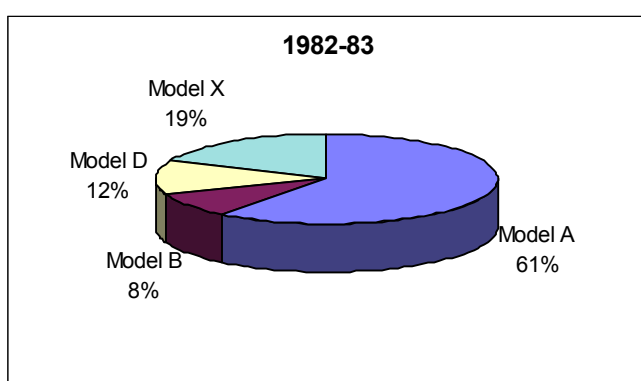
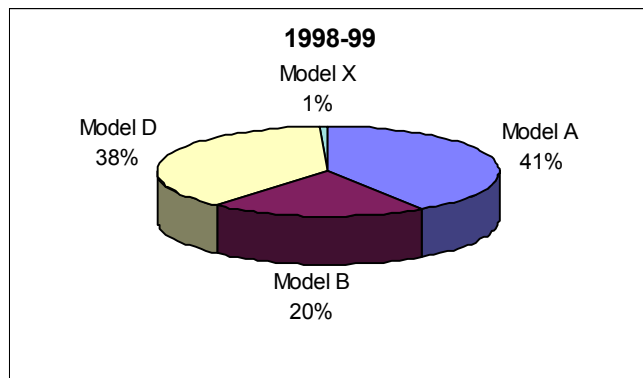


Figure 8: Percentage distribution of students in education system, 1998-99



Furthermore, the higher proportions of children at the lower levels of schooling in the Basque-er models suggests that the transformation is not yet complete, as can be seen by comparing the following three figures with the previous three. To ensure comparability pupils up to age 14 have been included.

Figure 9: Distribution of students aged 3-14 in figures

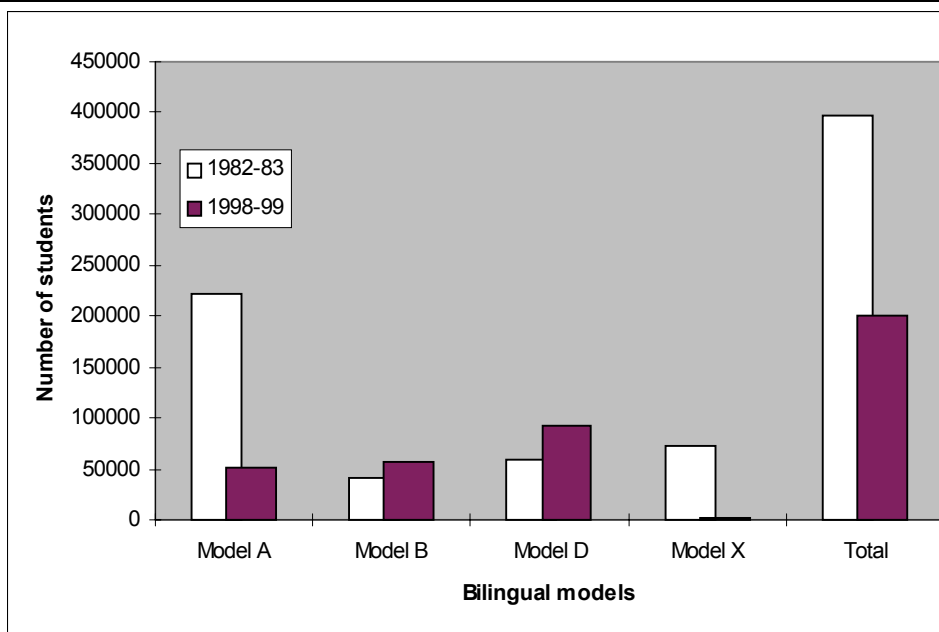


Figure 10: Percentage distribution of students in primary education, 1982-83

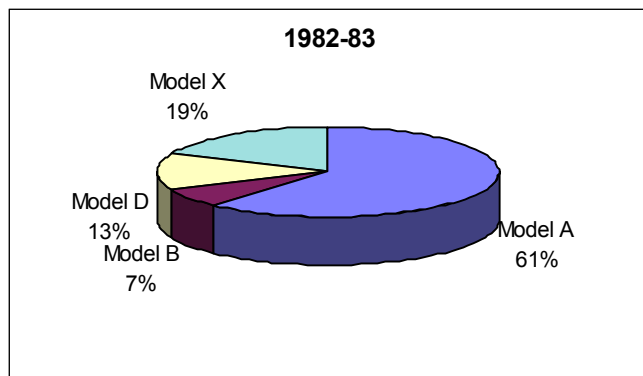
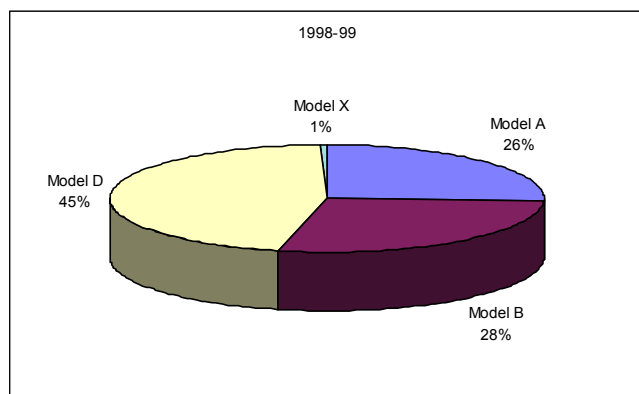


Figure 11: Percentage distribution of students aged 3-14, 1998-99



Parents no longer need to demonstrate *en masse* for Basque medium primary and secondary teaching for their offspring. The immense majority of them have it already available at a reasonable distance.

There are more or less enough teachers qualified in Basque to provide the Basque medium teaching required. It does not seem that the shortage of teachers is insuperable, although the department will have to continue for a few years more making a considerable effort to ensure that there are a sufficient number of such qualified teachers available each September, at the beginning of the new school year. A number of support services have been set up which contribute to the achievement of the objective. By early 1998 over 13,000 (56%) of all primary and secondary teachers with tenure had been certified to teach in Basque. Percentages are on the whole higher amongst the various categories of supply teachers.

But, of course, the distribution of students and the provision of support services is by no means the whole story. Several other aspects have to be taken into account to achieve a full picture of the situation. First of all, are students achieving the level of Basque programmed as objective for their schooling? Does schooling in Basque lead to lower or higher levels of achievement in school subjects? More research has been done on the first topic (*EIFE 1*, *EIFE 2*, *EIFE 3* and *HINE*), though none is being carried out at the present time. As suggested above, the results indicated that model **D** is generally more efficient than model **B**, which in turn is more efficient than model **A**, in securing satisfactory levels of achievement in the Basque language. Results for

the Spanish language are very similar throughout. It is nevertheless possible to spend one's entire schooling in model **D** and still not achieve a satisfactory command of the language used as teaching medium, as indeed it probably is in most western European education systems. Results from the *EGA* language competence examination, which many secondary school children sit, suggest that the school system still has some way to go in the cultivation of linguistic excellence. As regards the second topic the little research carried out to date has been inconclusive. Even if proper sampling is carried out, a major problem consists in ensuring that test materials in either language are of equivalent difficulty. The tendency of test makers to start from the dominant language and then translate mechanically into the minority language tends to invalidate such materials. Nevertheless, it is an area which needs solid, ongoing research. Society eagerly awaits the information. On the one hand, Basque language loyalists hope for confirmation that Basque medium teaching is being consolidated as a serious alternative to Spanish medium teaching. On the other, those Spanish monolinguals who feel they are losing out in the slight displacement of linguistic power suspect that reliable figures will prove the superiority of Spanish medium teaching, at least where native speakers of Spanish are concerned.

Nevertheless, the system set up by the department has a number of weaknesses. These weaknesses include:

- failure to develop vocational training in Basque. Some progress has been made, but the percentage of teachers and students working in Basque is noticeably lower than in other sectors of the system. It is true that vocational training does imply certain specific difficulties. The large number of courses and subjects on offer means that the market is often too small for textbook production and that groups of Basque speaking students are often too small and scattered for the department to make a proper response. The students in vocational training are potentially major contributors to local language maintenance and as such deserve special attention;
- the Department has taken fifteen years to produce a full Basque dimension to the curriculum;
- lack of a thorough-going support system for the development of the models, particularly model **B**, the most experimental in design. To guarantee success certain conditions at the pedagogical level need to be satisfied. This has not always been the case;
- the system relies to an inordinate degree on non-native speakers. While the efforts of these speakers, often in adulthood, to master a new language are praiseworthy, there must be doubts about the quality of the language model some of them can offer. At the same time a large number of native Basque teachers are unable to secure permanent posts. Throughout the expansion of Basque medium teaching the Basque Government has continued to hire Spanish speaking teachers and in practice has permitted private schools to do the same, against all logic. If a flexible staff is needed, then bilinguals are obviously more desirable than monolinguals.

The system that has been developed over the years has other inherent features worthy of note. Insofar as it is primarily dependent on parental demand, it is ultimately a democratic model. Parents get what they want. They no longer believe that Basque is a second class language to be got rid of as soon as possible. In the case of Basque speaking parents, no degraded self-image prevents them from sending their children to model **D**. But those pushing for the abolition of one or other model seem to forget that parental demand can change, that when parents realise that knowledge of Basque does relatively little to help finding a job or when they exchange that belief for another equally false one, (for example, that knowledge of English will automatically help get a job in the new European context) there could very well be a shift in preferences from one model to another. This is not to suggest that Basque medium teaching models are in any real danger at the present time. It is simply a reminder that fashions change and that the present volume of Basque medium teaching is far from assured for the future.

But the fundamental issue facing the department today is quite a different matter. It is basically that the volume of students and pupils within the primary and secondary education system is expected to decrease by nearly 50% in the twenty years from 1982-83 to 2002-03. This change in volume requires a major reorganisation of resources, but the department has not really planned for a smaller system. It is over-resourced in terms of personnel and premises. Initially, the drop in rolls was absorbed by increasing teacher to class ratios and reducing student to class ratios.

Table 6: Pupils per class ratios in state preprimary education

	1984-85	1998-99
Model A	25	13
Model B	22	15
Model D	20	16
Overall	24	16

But the latter seam is practically exhausted, as can be seen from the above table. Thus, the consequences of the falling rolls problem are likely to become visible in other ways over the next few years.

[Return to table of contents](#)

6. EDUCATION (III): OTHER ASPECTS

This final section on education is somewhat of a hotch-potch, containing those miscellaneous topics which do not fit into the scheme of the previous two chapters. Thus, the first two sections deal with primary and secondary education in Navarre and the continental Basque Country respectively, while the last two deal with university studies in Basque and Basque language learning for adults.

6.1. NAVARRE

Following on from the tri-partite linguistic division of Navarre mentioned in section 3.2.2.1. above the possibilities of obtaining a Basque language medium and subject primary and secondary education varies from the north to the south of Navarre. In the most northerly area models **B** and **D** are available. Model **D** is similar to that in force in the BAC. Model **B** is different in Navarre in that it is for children from Basque homes only and introduces one subject in Spanish in the middle two years of primary education and two subjects in the final two years. In the mixed language central zone, model **D** is optional, subject to parental demand and government approval. In the southernmost zone only Basque language lessons are optional, Basque medium teaching not having been taken into account. One result of this last stipulation is that *ikastola* schools in that zone have found themselves in serious financial difficulty. Model **G** in Navarre is defined in the same way as Model **X** in the BAC with the difference that it is a legally recognised model and also the most popular. The figures in table 7 suggest a growing preference for models including Basque as subject at least.

Table 7: Pupils by model in Navarre in the school year 1998-99

	Model A		Model D (and B)		Model G	
	Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%
Preprimary	3.872	28	3.629	26	6.334	46
Primary	5.869	20	6.175	21	17.105	59
Secondary	2.517	6	5.217	13	33.249	81
Total	12.258	15	15.021	18	56.688	68

6.2. CONTINENTAL BASQUE COUNTRY

Though the French Basque Country has a richer tradition of bilingual education with a long series of assimilationist initiatives going back to the last century, it has been somewhat overtaken by events in the peninsular part of the Country in the past twenty years. The 1951 Deixonne Law opened up some possibilities for the use of Basque in teaching, but the first *ikastola* did not open until 1969. The movement as a whole, gathered under the umbrella organisation *Seaska* has always been notably weaker than its Spanish counterpart: French government finance is less forthcoming and the numbers involved are smaller. An annual mass sponsored walk ensures some financial relief. A later initiative under the name of *Ikas-bi* has introduced bilingual teaching to the state schools.

Let us consider preprimary and primary education (ages 3-11) in the continental Basque Country in the school year 1998-99. The bilingual teaching models are not called **A**, **B** and **D** as they are in the BAC, but nevertheless correspond closely to them. The same names will thus be used for convenience in the following table:

Table 8: Pupils by model in primary education in the French Basque Country in the school year 1997-98

Model	Number of pupils	%
A	2700	11
B	2726	11
D	1287	5

6.3. UNIVERSITY LEVEL STUDIES

Initially, Basque was nowhere available at the university level in the Basque Country either as subject or medium. There were a number of language loyalist initiatives to introduce Basque to university level activities before the university was in fact ready to integrate such activities. A number of private institutions were set up at the time of the political transition from dictatorship to constitutional monarchy. These small scale institutions include:

- *UEU*, a Basque language summer school offering short courses on a variety of university subjects;
- *UZEI*, an organisation involved primarily in the production of specialised subject area dictionaries and terminology;
- *Elhuyar*, active in highbrow and middlebrow scientific divulgation.

These organisations were actively involved in forging Basque into a tool suitable for university uses. They continue to play a role in that task, alongside Basque language loyalist groups now working within the university itself. They are nowadays partially financed with public money,

A number of universities existed in the Basque Country at the time of Franco's death. In the BAC there was a well established private, Jesuit university at Deustu (Bilbo) with a branch in Donostia. Various faculties in the three provincial capitals of the BAC were attached to state universities outside the Basque Country. In Navarre there was a second private university run by the catholic organisation *Opus Dei* with a branch in Donostia. There was no public university in the continental Basque Country. In view of the population of Bilbo and the surrounding area the absence of a state university in the peninsular part of the Basque Country is perhaps somewhat surprising. It is usually ascribed to the fact that the state did not wish to compete with the Jesuit university and that it also wished to avoid providing a base for the development of a Basque intellectual elite. Whether this was true or not, the case for a Basque state university was strongly felt in the Basque Country. Thus, about the time of Franco's death and as a result of popular pressure, the University of Bilbao, subsequently expanded and renamed the University of the Basque Country (*Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea/Universidad del País Vasco*), was set up. About the same time *UNED*, the Spanish university for correspondence degrees, also set up a branch office in Bergara in Gipuzkoa. It has subsequently set up other branches in the Basque Country. Much more recently the Government of Navarre has also set up a public university in Pamplona. The Arrasate cooperative system has also integrated the separate university faculties it already possessed to form the basis of a new private technically oriented university. These faculties were formerly affiliated to the University of the Basque Country.

The University of the Basque Country, circumscribed to the BAC, is far and away the largest of these bodies. It has over 55,000 students, over 3,000 teaching staff and around 900 administrative staff. It is split into three main campuses, one in each of the three provincial capitals of the BAC, and offers a broad spectrum of university degrees. The Basque Government is the primary source of the university's finance, though university self-government means that the university has a large say in how the funds are to be spent. Comments on the Basquisition of university teaching will be restricted to this university. Very little progress has been made elsewhere, though the Jesuit university does offer the possibility of a degree in Basque language and literature. On the other hand, the University of the Basque

Country has made a considerable effort to Basquise its activities. To that end it set up a Basque Office, providing translation services, and subsequently a vice-rectorate to deal specifically with the Basquisition of university education. At the present time relatively few university courses can be taken in their entirety in Basque. Each five year degree course is usually composed of 25-30 subjects. Nearly 50% of these can now be studied in Basque. This does not of course mean that half the students are studying in Basque. Even so it seems around 13,000 students are taking some part of their course in Basque at the present time. About a quarter of all teaching staff are able to teach in Basque. They are now required to prove their ability to do so by examination. As regards administrative staff only about 10% have a level equivalent to *EGA* or higher. There can be no doubt that Basquisition of the university is a massive undertaking. Progress is dogged by exactly the same problems as in primary and secondary education: shortage of teachers and teaching materials. These problems are made more acute by the degree of specialisation that occurs at the university level. Basquisition measures have been taken in the context of periodic plans, much as in the administration. Noticeable progress has been made in the hiring of teaching staff. Since the 1990 Basquisition plan the number of staff able to teach in Basque has increased by about 50% due to new hiring. The production of textbooks is subsidised in a fashion similar to that of *EIMA*, under a joint programme with the Basque Government. A few theses have been read in Basque. The University finds itself under continuing pressure from part of its student population to expand its Basque language provision. Nevertheless, according to repeated studies, not all students requiring Basque medium degree courses do in fact have a level of Basque sufficient to get the most out of such studies.

6.4. LANGUAGE TEACHING FOR ADULTS

To satisfy adult demand for Basque language schools, *Euskaltzaindia* lent its support to a cultural organisation, *AEK*, set up precisely for that purpose. This organisation started working even before Franco's death and gradually set up a network of schools and classes, known as *euskaltegi* schools throughout the Basque Country. It eventually became independent of the Royal Academy for the Basque language. It had a two-fold concern: the first was literacy classes for adults; the second was the teaching of Basque as a second language for non-natives. With time the latter objective came to dominate through sheer numbers. In the major towns private enterprise was already at work setting up the first language schools outside the *AEK* network. Once Franco had died the one and only government-owned official school of languages in the BAC, situated in Deustu (Bilbo), obtained permission from the state government to offer Basque language classes to adults alongside the foreign language classes it was already offering. The official school in Zaragoza similarly obtained permission for its branch in Pamplona in the province of Navarre.

But the major change in governmental intervention in the topic came with the creation of *HABE* by the Department of Culture of the government of the BAC (from 1981 on). *HABE* was and is the official entity specifically concerned with literacy and second language learning for adults in Basque. It set out with the intention of professionalising Basque language teaching for adults, to put it on a par with the teaching of other modern European languages. With that object in mind it:

- created its own network of four pilot language schools (one residential),
- assisted local town councils in creating their own council owned Basque language schools,
- set up its own materials writing team, which in due course has published a number of language learning materials including audiovisual productions,
- started publishing a magazine for learners and a periodical and a whole series of relevant translations for Basque language teachers;
- established a curriculum of studies leading up to *EGA*;
- fixed minimum conditions for the functioning of *euskaltegi* schools

- provided government funds to support teaching activities in the private sector.

There was noticeable rivalry with *AEK*, which had been setting up its own materials team also publishing materials. *AEK* also started publishing a magazine for learners and a periodical for teachers. Apart from political motives, there were also differences of conception involved. *HABE*'s concept meant that the most generous financing tended to be limited to larger localities, particularly public *euskaltegi* schools set up over the following years by town councils but also larger schools able and willing to meet strict government criteria as regards premises, minimum class size, teacher qualification and professionalisation, curriculum and evaluation. On the other hand, *AEK* insisted on providing teaching wherever a need was detected. It claimed that government subsidy criteria in the BAC worked unfairly against this aim, as it was unable to ensure fully professional staff in all such circumstances. To improve funding, *AEK* started to organise bi-annual long distance mass sponsored runs round the Basque Country. *AEK* was at one period also torn by internal dissent with a considerable group of *euskaltegi* schools going their own way. Some set up a separate coordinating body by the name of *IKA*. *HABE* and *AEK* have reached a mutually acceptable agreement in the mid nineties regarding the subsidising of *AEK*'s activities in the BAC. *AEK* continues to provide classes in Navarre and the continental Basque Country. In the meantime, *HABE* decided to withdraw from directly providing teaching services itself and closed its four schools. It has become increasingly involved in assisting *IVAP-HAEE*, the government body for civil servant in-service training, in the execution of the Basque language teaching and examinations deriving from the introduction of language profiles in the administration. Funding limitations have somewhat restricted *HABE*'s activities in recent years.

The ordinary private sector had meanwhile grown considerably. In Bilbo, where it was particularly strong, it set up its own coordinating body under the name *Elkarlan*. One church owned organisation, *Labayru ikastegia*, also set up its own network throughout Biscay, though it seems now to have reduced its teaching activities once again to Bilbo. The official language school in the BAC was transferred to the control of the Basque government, which embarked on a programme of expansion, setting up another seven schools, all of which offer Basque alongside other modern languages. Similarly, control of the official language school in Pamplona was transferred to the government of Navarre, which has also opened a branch in Tuterá/Tudela. There are a number of other public bodies concerned with the teaching of Basque to adults, all with very specific concerns. Thus, *IVAP-HAEE* has its own residential centre for civil servants, *IRALE* has four schools at the present time and the government of Navarre has a single centre of its own for in-service teacher language training.

[Return to table of contents](#)

7. FUTURE PROSPECTS

Are the measures taken appropriate? What future faces Basque? There is no agreement on these points even amongst Basques. In this final chapter criticisms of present policy will be discussed first, before proceeding to attempt to gauge the present strength of the Basque language and to make a few concluding remarks.

7.1. CRITICISMS OF PRESENT POLICY

Such a vast undertaking as that of RLS in the Basque Country obviously generates a considerable amount of critical interest, both from interested and unwilling participants, from the various agents of social life, from qualified individuals on the spot and from academics at home and abroad. In this case too, many have had their say. This section endeavours to summarise their arguments under various headings: thus, the legal situation, the choice of domains, the economic sphere and the anti-RLS lobby will all be discussed in the following subsections. Some criticisms of educational policy have already been mentioned in section 5.4.

The participation of the Basque universities in what would seem to be part of their natural function of description, evaluation and criticism of the society in which they are rooted has been relatively disappointing so far. The universities should have much to say on the present RLS undertaking from the viewpoints of very different disciplines. Thus historians are needed to establish the social history of the language and to investigate the mass of historical documentation from a language point of view. Sciences of Education academics and experts in educational assessment are needed to study the bilingual educational system. Historians, legal experts, sociologists of language, geolinguists and even economists with a language interest are needed to examine the effects of recent status planning. Linguists, sociolinguists and pragmatists are also needed to provide greater information on the corpus of the language. With the notable exception of linguists and to a lesser degree educationists, the contribution of the Basque universities appears unexpectedly limited. Thus, academic evaluation work has as frequently come from the administration itself. Much sociology of language work proceeds from public and private non-university institutions. The best known local academic proponent of RLS measures, José Mari Sánchez Carrión, has never held a stable university post. The private company *Siadeco* has carried out a considerable number of mostly local pieces of research. A number of individuals have also written on these topics. A small number of foreign academics has shown an interest in the Basque language question, usually and since the last century from a linguistic point of view. However, more recently, sociologists of language such as J. Fishman, participants in the *Euromosaic* project and R. Bourhis have also shown an active interest. Both J. Cummins and F. Genesee from North America have visited the Basque Country and contributed to the discussion on bilingual education.

7.1.1. The legal situation

A number of Basques consider the present legal situation totally inadequate to deal with the requirements of the Basque speech community.

In particular, there is the matter of the possible adoption of the territoriality principle of language rights (as in, say, most of Switzerland or Belgium) as opposed to the personality principle at present in force (similar to the situation in other bilingual communities in Spain, the situation in Brussels, Swiss Friburg or Wales). The argument in favour of such a change runs along roughly these lines. The personality principle of individual rights ultimately merely ensures the survival and continuing encroachment of Spanish. Basque needs its own monolingual heartland. Application of the territoriality principle is paramount in order to obtain it. Some would continue the argument a little further. Since the application of such a principle is

unobtainable under the Spanish legal system let alone the French system, the creation of a Basque state is essential. As proof of this, the only paragraph of a single article in the 1982 BAC Law for the Normalisation of the use of the Basque language which operated on the territorial principle, minor though it was, was declared unconstitutional by the Spanish constitutional court. Sánchez Carrión's insistence on the necessity of 'compacting' Basque speakers can also be invoked in this respect.

There is no doubt that the argument is attractive. It is clear that a consolidated monolingual heartland could do much to ensure the survival of any endangered language minority. It is also true that such a hinterland is legally unobtainable under the present legal systems in force in the Basque Country. But the legal aspect is only one of the aspects of the problem that needs consideration. In language matters the law often limits itself to sanctioning what has already become reality or enabling what sociological dynamics could potentially make reality. What it cannot do in a reasonably democratic society is fulfil a coercive function in any major way. Thus, in addition to the legal aspects, a thorough revision of sociological ones is also necessary. For example:

- the most obvious targets for the creation of monolingual areas are those that already have the highest percentage of Basque speakers, basically rural areas, particularly in the province of Gipuzkoa;
- some parents in such areas have gone so far as to demand extra Spanish lessons for their offspring because they consider their command of Spanish too weak. They are hardly likely to favour a move towards Basque monolingualism, especially as Spanish will continue to be necessary for a broad array of functions in the foreseeable future;
- the size of such enclaves being so small, the attraction of Spanish and/or French language services and activities both outside and even **inside** them (television, reading materials...) is likely to continue the use of the dominant languages;
- many born within such enclaves will leave them permanently or semi-permanently for economic or personal reasons, as they do at present. Similarly, other non-natives will continue to move in for the same reasons;
- major planning decisions affecting the lives of those in such enclaves, cultural activities and even in some cases basic educational activities, will continue to take place outside such enclaves;
- the improvement in transport and communication facilities, together with the increased variety of life-styles potentially available, has brought about major changes in the networks that speakers of a language are involved in. Many such networks are less and less tied to a specific community of people in a specific place;
- in short, such enclaves and related territories of a similar make-up will no doubt continue to be central in the survival of Basque, but at the same time the enclaves are likely to be just too small to constitute a major motor for the language.

A second set of considerations revolves around the idea that the territoriality principle is a two-edged sword. After all, the Basque Country contains a majority of monolingual non speakers of Basque. Given the current democratic mode of functioning and bearing in mind its western European context, it would not be surprising if Spanish speakers were to push for even larger monolingual territories of their own, if Basque speakers were to obtain monolingual territories for their mother tongue. Developments to date in Navarre reflect this possibility, as do some proposals for Araba.

All this does not mean that the creation of monolingual territories is necessarily pointless nor that the personality principle is a panacea. The weakness of the latter lies in the need for continual vigilance to ensure full implementation of the measures necessary for the realisation of the rights corresponding to that principle. Ultimately, it is a question of which of the two principles provides greater support for the Basque language. It may well be that one can go just as far towards creating predominantly monolingual Basque areas within present legislation and

with far less effort, as seems to have happened in some areas of Catalonia. What seems impossible under either dispensation is a hundred per cent monolingual enclave. Granting monolingual official status to a minority language ultimately affects prestigious but relatively marginal uses of the language, useful but not vital to its survival. Declaration by decree of a monolingual enclave cannot ensure its existence in practice. It should be clear from the last few paragraphs that the answer to the choice between differing principles of language rights is not a foregone conclusion, contrary to what some in the Basque Country are inclined to think.

7.1.2. Choice of domains

A further area of criticism of the present activity of Basque language loyalists has to do with the domains that these loyalists choose to work on. It is directed equally at state promoted initiatives and private ones. Basques are often very conscious that others around them, particularly Spanish and French speakers, frequently regard or, at least, have regarded Basque as an inferior language, suitable perhaps for domestic and rural purposes, but not for the modern world of intellectual creativity, tertiary education and high technology. In their enthusiasm to prove that Basque is indeed a modern language, Basque language loyalists have often concentrated on aspects of the language which are not central to its survival, although they complement its range of uses. Thus, over the past few years, Basque has appeared on radio and TV, CD-ROM's and computer screens. Many areas of intellectual discipline now have a growing vocabulary in Basque, used in classes, specialist magazines and research.

This preoccupation with modernity has perhaps obscured the fact that the vital thing about language survival is transmitting it natively to the next generation. This transmission takes place in certain areas of life in particular: the family, the local community, lower level schooling and the lower work sphere, until those youngsters who have grown up in Basque become working adults ready in turn to start a family and transmit Basque to their children. These areas have been relatively neglected in formal language planning in the Basque Country, though figures suggest that losses on the home front are fewer than they used to be, at least in the BAC. Basques have tended to assume that such transmission is natural and cannot be given any special assistance. This is not the case. If a Basque speaker marries a non-speaker (a common occurrence), it seems less likely that the children will learn Basque at home, especially if the non-speaker is the mother. The opportunities for Basques to use Basque outside the home in everyday activities such as shopping, meeting friends, at church etc. vary enormously from case to case. Language planners can do certain things in such circumstances to promote language use, to strengthen the expectation that the new-born child will be brought up Basque speaking, but on the whole few such measures have been considered and fewer taken. In comparison, relatively more effort and certainly more money has been expended on more modern, scientific, technological uses of the language, which are less central and influence smaller numbers of users. The problem here is not the limits imposed by present laws, but the lack of a proper awareness of priorities on the part of Basque language planners and Basques in general.

J. Fishman sums up this criticism as follows in his article *Language Spread and language policy for endangered languages*:

Basque advocates work on terminologies for the natural sciences in higher education, because, presumably, that will advance the day when a unilingually-Basque 'Basque Country' will arise again on both sides of the Pyrenees. (...) Although it is clear to those who adopt such policies for themselves, and to those who advocate them for others, that the time and effort invested in spreading their endangered language into the uppermost functions of modernity will (a) attract few who are both willing and capable of using that language for these functions and (b) do little if anything to stem the ongoing attrition with respect to the primary determinants of inter-generational language transmission (in Western or Westernized society: home, neighborhood, elementary school, work-sphere, religious domain), nevertheless, *such efforts continue unabated and represent major language policy decisions.*

7.1.3. Economic sphere

The work sphere was mentioned briefly in the previous paragraph, but something more needs to be said about the economic aspects of status planning. With regard to language maintenance the economic sphere has two functions. First of all, it is important that the ethnocultural community seeking survival have an adequate economic base, that its members have jobs providing them with an acceptable living. Secondly, some Basque speakers at least should find Basque useful, even necessary, at work, if they are to perceive maintaining the language and transmitting it to their children as desirable. Both these aspects may require a certain degree of economic or other types of planning, including perhaps land use planning, spheres largely neglected up till now in the Basque Country.

7.1.3.1. In pursuit of a wealthy ethnocultural community

The first aim mentioned is much broader than the second. Not all jobs within the country are or ever could be Basque speaking, but all Basque speakers need to participate in and benefit from the creation of local wealth, if the community is to have the resources necessary to promote its own and the language's survival. In this regard *ETA's* activity, avowedly pro-Basque language in intention, has often been doubly negative. It has almost certainly scared companies away from the Basque Country and its financial demands on some of those present has worsened their economic position. Many other factors are however involved in the relative economic decline of the Basque Country over the past few years: the oil crises, collapse of traditional foundry and shipbuilding industries, cut-backs in consumer spending, growth of new commercial/industrial centres within Spain, globalisation of the economy and entry into the Common Market leading to increased competition with foreign firms, eclipse of a more traditional Basque attitude of hard-work-and-no-play for a more hedonistic outlook... Spanish state government policy has also been criticised as a contributory factor, particularly with regard to decisions on major (dis)investments, which on the whole have had a negative effect in the BAC.

7.1.3.2. Basque language job opportunities

The second aim is much more restricted. Some Basques work in nationwide or even international companies which in most cases will never give Basque more than a limited presence, perhaps in attention to clients, labelling, store signing, complaints service, advertisements etc. But others work in small or medium-sized local firms, in some cases traditionally Basque-speaking. The ideal here could be to help traditionally Basque speaking firms, particularly of a rural nature but more recently in the cultural service industry, to strengthen their Basqueness and to detect and assist companies which could easily develop along similar lines. Until fairly recently very little indeed had been done in this sphere. The government language planning body is now promoting some initiatives.

7.1.4. Fundamental disagreements

Finally, it would be wrong to leave the impression that everybody in the Basque Country fully supports the new policy towards the Basque language and that the only disagreements are about tactics. Although uninterested in or against the maintenance of Basque, some sectors of society, usually of monolingual Spanish speakers, initially showed some tolerance for a new improved status for the language. Some of these people have become increasingly concerned about and, in some cases, overtly hostile to what they consider to be unjustified discrimination in favour of Basque speakers in terms of public jobs, teaching posts and public funds for cultural activities. Their position can be resumed along the lines:

- maintenance, but not expansion, of Basque. To this end some would limit the area of the BAC where Basque is official;
- less public money for and less government speed in implementation, because other policies deserve greater priority;
- Spanish speaking teachers' and public servants' job security and right to use Spanish only should be given precedence over those of Basque speakers to deal with the administration and to receive schooling in the language of their choice.

The extreme position, occasionally voiced, is that Basque is drowning Spanish: statistically a nonsense. On every measure Spanish and French are stronger than Basque in the corresponding parts of the Basque Country.

7.2. STRENGTH OF BASQUE

How strong is the language? Various indicators may be used to give an indication of the strength or weakness of the language. In this section, the initial part will contain a qualitative review of gains, losses and foreseeable challenges; the next will look at the value of counting heads; the third will reflect Fishman's view and the last that expressed in *Euromosaic*.

7.2.1. Review of gains, losses and challenges

The next three paragraphs discuss some of the gains and losses of RLS with respect to Basque over the past few years and some of the new challenges facing it over the next few.

7.2.1.1. Gains

Let us list a few of the positive gains. The present RLS enterprise is the furthest reaching attempt in the history of the language. It is being carried out through the medium of the Basque language itself to a degree never before encountered. Basque now has a new legal status, more potential speakers and especially learners than ever before. The new generations of native speakers are virtually fully literate in Basque, a completely new phenomenon which is giving rise to a new wave of printed materials. More books are now printed in Basque per year than in the whole of the previous 400 years. Basque is being used in areas it has never or hardly ever been used in before: administration, University, computer software, audiovisual materials. Its use in the church, in primary and secondary education and in printed materials continues to expand. Some villages and small towns in the BAC where Basque was declining have managed to reverse the decline. Public funds are available to support Basque on a scale unthinkable even twenty years ago thanks to the quota of power obtained by politicians favourable to improving the status of Basque. In short, the people who have forecast the near-immediate death of Basque over the last two hundred years have made a mistake. The survival of Basque has now been ensured at least well into the twenty-first century.

7.2.1.2. Losses

But not all is so positive. A small elite now possesses a fairly fully up-dated language suitable for all its mainly urban, modernising purposes. But it is easy to observe that not all who know the language use it. Among those who do use it many do not master it sufficiently well for all the potential uses it now has, even after going through the school system. Research on achievement in the Basque language at schools shows that children attain very differing levels of competence in the language. Many people interested in the maintenance of the Basque language observe that school Basque develops at times into a form very different from traditional Basque, often referred to as *euskañol*, a hybrid name formed from *euskara* (Basque) and *español* (Spanish) on the lines of Spanglish or *franglais*. Some students master neither their

home dialect nor the new standard. Grammatical errors never accepted before have now become widely current in the spoken language of youngsters. In short, it may be true that there have never been more potential speakers of Basque, but it is also true that their command of the language has never been weaker. There are virtually no monolinguals beyond the ages of three and four. The opportunities to use the language have also decreased for many individuals, as an increasing part of their day is taken up in relations with speakers of other languages. And Basque is still faced with the possibility of gradual extinction on the French side of the border.

7.2.1.3. Challenges

A new problem also faces Basque. In the distant past only a limited number of Basques needed a second language in everyday life. The rest had no such needs and often lived almost their entire lives in a few square miles. In the more recent past, most needed some knowledge at least of the dominant state language in addition. But nowadays life has become much more international. French or Spanish speakers live next door. Radio and television programmes, daily newspapers and other reading materials are audible/visible in the living room and are often more attractive than those available in Basque. Other international languages are often essential or, probably more accurately, popularly believed to be essential for work, particularly English. Basque speakers themselves are far more likely to have dealings with foreigners in a language other than Basque and also go further from their birthplace more frequently on trips abroad for business or pleasure, to jobs in other parts of Spain or France or increasingly in other parts of Europe or for long stays abroad as an integral part of one's studies. While Basque will continue to be the prime language of home use for many, but not all, natives, it will more and more have to share time with other languages. Those languages may not carry the emotional charge that the mother tongue carries, may not be loved in the same way, but they are making their presence felt. Internationalisation is also bringing about a new immigration. Small in numbers as yet, these new immigrants are culturally further removed than previous native French and Spanish speaking in-migrants and may come to represent a new linguistic challenge in the future.

7.2.2. Strength in numbers

If we ask people how to measure the strength of a language, it seems probable that the most popular answer will be to count the speakers. The problems of census figures in themselves have already been discussed in section 1.4.2. But it is necessary to underline the very limited value of head counting. The strength of a language is visible in the underlying dynamics of language use, whereas numbers do not correlate directly with strength as the *Euromosaic* report is at pains to stress. Basque has many more speakers than a hundred years ago, but is nevertheless weaker in many ways than then. But numbers do have a role. Depending on the activity involved it may be possible to determine viability in terms of a threshold number of speakers. Thus, to sustain book sales in a particular language a certain threshold of potential readers is necessary for publishing to become an economic proposition. A fairly low threshold no doubt applies to radio broadcasting, whilst a much higher one must be applicable to the labour and capital intensive activity of television broadcasting. But even in the case of such thresholds, where numbers are a *sine qua non*, they are obviously not sufficient. For example, to sell books in any quantity the language users also need to have attained a certain degree of literacy, not guaranteed by numbers alone. In the Basque case it is clear that such a threshold has been attained for primary and secondary education, for radio and book and some periodical publishing. On the other hand, tertiary education, computer programmes, daily newspapers and television seem to be borderline cases. It remains to be seen whether these can survive in the long term. In a word, it is not the case that all languages can aspire to all things: Basque has its limits too; and those limits can be partially determined in numerical terms.

7.2.3. Fishman's evaluation

Professor Fishman refers to the situation of Basque repeatedly in his book entitled *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages*, particularly in chapter 6 (see Azurmendi *et al.* for an update). The book develops a Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) which reflects varying degrees of disruption of the possibility of a language being transmitted intergenerationally and which is illustrated by reference to a number of languages worldwide including Basque. Thus:

- at stage 8 there are only vestigial users of the language in question;
- at stage 7 the population, though more integrated, is beyond child-bearing age;
- the goal to be pursued at stage 6 is the attainment of intergenerational informal orality;
- stage 5 includes literacy but without extra-communal reinforcement;
- stage 4 includes use of the language in lower level formal education;
- stage 3 includes use of the language in the lower work sphere;
- in stage 2 use of the language is pursued in basic governmental services and the mass media;
- in stage 1 some use of the language is to be expected in spheres already mentioned, but at a higher level (education, work, government and media).

According to tabulated information Professor Fishman considers that stages 1 to 4 and 8 are currently receiving most attention in Basque RLS-efforts. Bearing in mind the total dislocation score generated by Basque according to his criteria, it falls below Francophone Quebec, Hebrew, Yiddish Ultra-Orthodox (New York City), Spanish (New York Puerto Ricans), Navajo (one community), certain post World War II Australian immigrants and Frisian. Fishman places especial emphasis on the correct sequencing of the stages to ensure success of the RLS effort. It is difficult to do justice to his evaluation of the Basque RLS effort in such a brief explanation, but some quotations seem very apt:

It is still too early to tell whether Basque will re-establish the solid links with the home family-neighborhood-community life nexus of intergenerational mother tongue transmission, links that Irish failed to make during the springtime of its own RLS-efforts. The next generation will tell the story *vis-à-vis* Basque, and at the same time it will become clear whether Irish RLS-efforts will slip into the quiet and querulous hush that increasingly surrounds Frisian RLS-efforts today.

Some mention of his concluding remarks must also be made. He refers only to the BAC:

All the major drawbacks to Basque RLS are stubbornly lingering residues of the past: erosion of the hinterland due to continuing urbanisation and the unprofitability of small rural holdings, demographic weakness within the BAC itself due to the high proportion of Spanish speakers and hispanicized Basques, and the lack of a well-known, productive and widespread literacy tradition. In view of the above circumstances (and the psychological counterparts which they engender) realistic Basque RLS-efforts would be forced to accept the long-term inevitability of bilingualism, even if there were no central state requirements in that connection. Given these circumstances, it is clear that there is still an ever-present danger of 'Irelandization' in the long run, because of the lack of secure home, family and neighborhood foundations for converting the vast variety of RLS-efforts that are underway into a safe intergenerational transmission process.

There can be no doubt, however, that short-run time has been gained, whether one compares youngsters with their parents or older youngsters with younger ones. (...) A supradialectal standard has gained increased acceptance and the corpus of the language has been dramatically expanded. Most dramatic of all is the explosion in urban and governmental use, thin facades, it is true, over the underlying Spanish, but a growing 'sign of the times'. All in all, progress has been made, a new generation will certainly have been deeply influenced, and the true dimensions of the continuing struggle are now better recognized than before. With proper priorities (more directly focusing on fostering

and propagating stage 6) the future of Basque can be much, much safer than the recent past has been.

The reader is referred to Fishman's book for fuller information.

7.2.4. *Euromosaic's* evaluation

The *Euromosaic* report was commissioned by the European Commission in an attempt to find some sort of theoretical basis for the treatment of minority language problems throughout the European Union, in the face of increasing demands on its resources. A total of 48 minorities are considered in the report, which is in turn a summary of more thoroughgoing research findings. The Basque Community is treated as three minorities (BAC, Navarre, continental Basque Country), with separate evaluations for each, given the diversity of treatment that the language receives in each territory. In the following paragraphs the relevant tables and summaries will be cited along with the minimum of additional information necessary to facilitate understanding.

7.2.4.1. Ranking of the Basque minority

The following two tables have been extracted from the full tables referring to all 48 minorities and slightly modified for presentation purposes.

Table 9: Production and Reproduction of the Basque language

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Rank order	State	Minority	Family	Cultural Reproduction	Community	Language Prestige	Institution-alization	Legitimation	Education	Total
8	Spain	BAC	2	4	2	2	2	4	3	19
21	Spain	Navarre	3	3	2	1	1	2	1	13
26	France	Iparralde	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	10

The forty eight minorities were placed on a five point scale from low to high (0-4) with regard to various factors considered necessary to ensure language reproduction (inter-generational language transmission) and production (second language learning). Following the order of the table above from column four to ten, the factors considered are:

- the strength of the family as an agency for transmission;
- the relevance of culture;
- the role of the community;
- the value of the language for social mobility, i.e. its prestige;
- the degree of institutionalisation of language use;
- its legitimation;
- the role of education.

For further details of how the concepts are to be understood the reader is referred to the *Euromosaic* report. The results coincide with a widespread appreciation of the differing relative strengths of the language in the three territories.

In a subsequent table communities were grouped together on the basis of underlying similarities. It is this grouping which explains both the cluster reference and the change in rank order in column 2. This second table is concerned with indicating the position of each minority in the ongoing economic restructuring occurring under the auspices of the European Union according to each of four indicators.

Table 10: Economic coordinates of Basque language situation

Language Group	Cluster/ Rank	Size	Economic Diversity	In-migration	Core- Periphery	Heartland
BAC	B 6	544,000	High	High	Semi	Yes
Navarre	C 18	53,000	Medium	Low	Semi	No
Iparralde	D 26	86,000	Medium	High	Semi	No

The scores of the three Basque minorities on these scales of European economic integration suggest that Basque has successfully overcome a number of hurdles, for example, moving from a primary sector rural based economy to a more balanced one. It has also gone a long way towards achieving the degree of integration necessary for survival in a European wide economy. It is these economic transformations which provide ‘do or die’ situations for minorities, and many do die out as a result. The perspectives for Basque are not glowing, but are definitely healthier than those of a number of European minorities.

7.2.4.2. Comments on the Basque minorities

The first and longest quotation refers to the BAC, comparing the situation of the language in that territory to that of Welsh which falls three places lower in the overall rank order:

Two of the language groups -Basque and Welsh- are similar in many respects. They are both languages which have considerable linguistic distance from the respective dominant languages, and they have a similar degree of language density and a comparable number of speakers, about half a million. They are also integrated into the mainstream of economic diversification, even if the entire population of speakers are differentially integrated into that process. The rapid process of economic change and the associated process of in-migration has had a profound impact upon the respective languages, but it has also stimulated a reaction that has led to innovative developments by reference to the production of the languages which is the sine qua non of survival under such conditions. Yet the low percentage of speakers within the territory merits concern. The political autonomy of the Basques gives this language group distinctive advantages over the Welsh, notwithstanding that the British state has established the Welsh Language Board as a form of language watchdog that will be responsible for implementing the recent Welsh Language Act.

One might nevertheless add that in a situation where neo-liberalism is becoming a dominant discourse, with its watchword of ‘rolling back the state’, it seems on first approach that the Welsh may well be better placed with regard to future financing than the Basques. The Welsh have traditionally placed relatively greater reliance on self-help and private sponsorship than Basques. In the BAC in particular language loyalists have relied heavily in recent years on public-funded support for an immense number of initiatives.

Secondly, the weakest of the three sub-minorities is discussed:

The situation among the [continental] Basque language group is, in some respects, similar to that of the Corsicans. The membership of this language group is about 85,000 or about a third of the local population. Again this is an area that has been subject to a massive in-migration, to the extent that there was a population growth of 25% between 1961 and 1991, with as much as 43% of the population in the district of Lapurdi being in-migrants. Again this is a phenomenon that appears to relate primarily to the increase in tourist

activity and the attraction of the area as a retirement haven for the rest of France. If anything, this language group receives even less recognition and support from the French state than does the Corsican, but this is countered by its proximity to the language group in Spain whose media resources are accessible across the frontier.

7.3. CONCLUSION

To sum up, Basque has made extraordinary advances in many areas over the last twenty years. It remains to be seen whether those advances are sufficiently consistent to last. More importantly, are the most basic factors in native language transmission are being properly dealt with? The school can add to what parents have passed on to their children and it can prepare them for a Basque working life. But without native parents using the language at home, the school can at best and at great cost produce competent second language speakers, who are secondary for the survival of Basque. Similarly, without the option of at least some jobs in Basque, why should the school bother to develop children's Basque? Of course, the final decision about whether to persevere belongs to the next generation. Much has been achieved by a generation which has suffered an oppression which was at times brutal and at times simply petty minded both in matters of language use and in many other areas of life. It remains to be seen whether the generation now growing up will be quite as militant in the pursuit of its own language rights. Will they share their parents' enthusiasm for their mother tongue or will they be more attracted by the European prizes to be won via other languages? Will the relative power base provided by Basque nationalism be diluted or lost in the face of new political trends or in the widespread climate of rejection expressed towards all stateless nationalisms in the wake of the most recent European war? Would this in turn affect the prospects of the Basque language? Over the last few years it is noticeable that at each successive election Basque nationalists obtain a smaller percentage of the vote. Could the present relatively pro Basque language climate fade in the same way as the saliency of ethnicity rose and fell in the USA from the sixties on?

At a time when Basque is historically at its weakest in relation to the surrounding languages, it has achieved a relatively favourable setting for its survival. But, as changes in the social use of language are relatively slow, the outcome of the present effort to reverse language shift remains to be seen. Basque's chances of survival are clearly better than that of many European minorities, some of which seem condemned to a lingering death.

What should be an appropriate policy for Basque? With regard to the economic scenario Basque is far from badly placed. It has already survived the initial massive dislocation caused by industrialisation, a leap which many minority languages have failed to make. It nevertheless seems urgent to link general economic planning with language planning. It has been suggested that the creation of a specifically Basque transfrontier region should constitute a long term goal. The territory of the Basque Country is at present included in a wider ranging trans-Pyrenean work group, but the Basque presence is too diluted for it to become a language planning tool. On the whole, Basque language planners have been fairly inward looking with relatively few international connections. Some foreign examples are relatively better known than others (Canada, Ireland, Israel...) but these are not always the most easily comparable. The Welsh experience of language planning in various aspects could provide hints for future policies, although it has hardly been examined from the Basque Country. Welsh in Wales is, on many parameters, the language situation closest to that of Basque in the Basque Country. In some aspects at least the Basques could usefully learn from the Welsh: economic planning, land use planning, maintenance of a broad consensus on language policy, specific procedures in education, use of private sector involvement, minority language promotion in the business sector, academic evaluation of process... Welsh observers are on the whole far better informed about the Basque situation than the Basques about Welsh and they already seem to have drawn lessons of their own from the Basque situation.

Basque speakers themselves are in disagreement about future scenarios. Some seem to think that it is only a matter of time before the Basque Country once again becomes a largely monolingual country. Others consider that the present dynamic means that such a scenario is a mere pipe dream and would be happy with far more modest gains. It seems clear that a return to a stable diglossic situation of the traditional sort is also impossible. Basque society is now far more complex, the networks more varied and less predictable. In this new context it is difficult to suggest a convincing blueprint for reasonable language planning goals that take the challenges of modernity as well as the remains of the traditional configuration into account. The Basque Government has, nevertheless, made a first step in that direction with the publication in 1999 of its general plan for the promotion of the use of Basque. Some Spanish monolinguals probably think that enough or even more than enough has already been done to improve the social situation of Basque and that it should henceforward be left to fend for itself. Some would probably like to turn the clock back, but the Country as a whole is clearly in no mood to do so.

[Return to table of contents](#)

APPENDIXES

1. ENGLISH LANGUAGE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Due to the dearth of materials in English on this topic an endeavour has been made to record all relevant English language publications (books, pamphlets and articles) whatever their quality, degree of updatedness and accuracy. Linguistic analysis of Basque has been excluded, but dictionaries and two teach-yourself Basque books have been included. For an English language booklist on all topics related to the Basque region, including language related matters, the following bibliography should also be consulted:

West, G. (1998) *Basque Region* (World Bibliographical series vol. 212), Clio Press, Oxford, Santa Barbara and Denver.

Agote, I. & I. Azkue (1992) Language planning within the public administration of the Basque Autonomous Community in L. Dafis (ed.) *Lesser Used Languages - Assimilating Newcomers. Proceedings* (1992:55-70)

Aldekoa, J. and Gardner, N. (2002, in press) Turning Knowledge of Basque into Use: Normalization Plans for Schools in the *International Journal for Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 5. 5.

Arzamendi, J. and F. Genesee (1997) Reflections on immersion education in the Basque Country in *Immersion education: International Perspectives* (Johnson K. and M. Swain eds.) (1997:151-66), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Aulestia, G. (1989) *Basque-English Dictionary*, University of Nevada Press, Reno & Las Vegas.

Aulestia, G. & L. White (1990) *English-Basque Dictionary*, University of Nevada Press, Reno & Las Vegas.

Azurmendi, M.J., Bachoc, E. and Zabaleta, F. (2001) Reversing Language Shift: the Case of Basque in J. A. Fishman (ed.) *Can Threatened Languages Be Saved?* (pp. 234-259). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Berriatua, X. (ed.) (1983) The Statute of Autonomy of the Basque Country in *Euskal Herriko Autonomia Estatutua*, (1983: 165-190), Eusko Jaurlaritzaren Argitalpen Zerbitzu Nagusia, Gasteiz.

II. Euskal Mundu Biltzarra (1988) *Euskara Biltzarra/Congreso de la Lengua Vasca*, 3 vols., Eusko Jaurlaritzaren Argitalpen Zerbitzu Nagusia, Gasteiz.

Cenoz, J. (1998) Multilingual Education in the Basque Country in *Beyond Bilingualism: Multilingualism and Multilingual Education* (Cenoz J. and F. Genesee eds.) (1998: 175-191), Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, Philadelphia & Adelaide.

Cenoz, J. (2001) Basque in Spain and France in G. Extra and D. Gorter (eds) *The Other Languages of Europe* (pp. 45-57). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Cenoz, J. and D. Lindsay (1994) Teaching English in primary school: A project to introduce a third language to eight year olds in the Basque Country in *Language and Education* 8, 201-10.

Cenoz, J. and J. Perales (2001) The Basque speech community in M.T. Turell (ed.) *Multilingualism in Spain*, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, Philadelphia & Adelaide.

Cenoz, J. and J. Valencia (1994) Additive trilingualism: Evidence from the Basque Country in *Applied Psycholinguistics* 15, 157-209.

Cenoz, J., Hufeisen, B. and Jessner, U. (eds) (2001) *Cross-linguistic influence in third language acquisition*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Cobarrubias, J. & C. Garmendia (1987) Language Policy and Language Planning Efforts in Spain in *Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Language Planning*, (Laforge ed.) International Center for Research on Bilingualism (1987: 143-191), Les Presses de l'Université Laval.



- Cummins, J. (1988) Research and Theory in Bilingual Education: the Basque situation in international perspective in II. Euskal Mundu Biltzarra (1988: III, 197-210).
- Erize, X. (2000) Making Good Boundaries in *Planet* (n° 140, April/May 2000, pp. 66-75).
- Eusko Jaurlaritza, Kultura Saila (1999) *Euskara Biziberritzeko Plan Nagusia/Plan General de Promoción del Uso del Euskera*. Vitoria-Gasteiz: Eusko Jaurlaritzaren Argitalpen Zerbitzu Nagusia [an unpublished English translation is available from hizkpol@ej-gv.es].
- EUSTAT (1996) *Euskadi '96*, (Statistical panorama), EUSTAT, Gasteiz.
- Fishman, J. (1987) Language Spread and language policy for endangered languages in *Language & Ethnicity in Minority Sociolinguistic Perspective*, (1989), Multilingual Matters, Clevedon & Philadelphia.
- Fishman, J. (1991) *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages*, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, Philadelphia & Adelaide.
- Gabiña, J. J. et al (1986) *EIFE: influence of factors on the learning of Basque*, Eusko Jaurlaritzaren Argitalpen Zerbitzu Nagusia, Gasteiz (Available on request free of charge from huisseus2@ej-gv.es).
- Gardner, N. (1988a) Renewal in IRALE in II. Euskal Mundu Biltzarra (1988: III, 285-9).
- Gardner, N. (1988b) Proficiency certification problems in a minority language in II. Euskal Mundu Biltzarra (1988: III, 189-195).
- Gardner, N. (1992) Language Planning in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country 1975-1989 in Hughes (ed.) (1992: 16-32).
- Gardner, N. (2000) *The Basque language in education in Spain*, Mercator-Education, Ljouvert/Leeuwarden ([available on line](#)).
- Gardner, N. (2002) Language Policy for Basque in Education (submission to the National Assembly for Wales Education & Lifelong Learning Committee, [available on line](#))
- Gardner, N. (n.d.) *Goodwill, Language Planning and Language Policies*, Joint Working Party on Bilingualism in Dyfed, Carmarthen.
- Gardner, N., M. Puigdevall i Serralvo and C. H. Williams (2000) Language Revitalization in Comparative Context: Ireland, the Basque Country and Catalonia in *Language Revitalization: Policy and Planning in Wales* (C. H. Williams, ed.) University of Wales Press, Cardiff.
- Garmendia, M. K. & X. Aizpurua (1990) A demolinguistic analysis of the Basque Autonomous Community derived from the census of 1986 in *Fourth International Conference on Minority Languages, Vol. II: Western and Eastern European Papers*, (Ed. D. Gorter, J. F. Hoekstra, L. G: Jansma & J. Ytsma), (1990: 115-133).
- Grin, F. & F. Vaillancourt (1999) *The cost effectiveness evaluation of minority language policies: Case studies on Wales, Ireland and the Basque Country*, ECMI monograph 2, European Centre for Minority Issues, Flensburg.
- HABE (1987) *HABE*, HABE, Donostia.
- Hezkuntza, Unibertsitate eta Ikerketa Saila (1986) *Six years of autonomy in Education*, Eusko Jaurlaritzaren Argitalpen Zerbitzu Nagusia, Gasteiz.
- Hizkuntza Politikarako Idazkaritza (1986) *Basic Law of the Standardization of the Use of Basque*, Eusko Jaurlaritzaren Argitalpen Zerbitzu Nagusia, Gasteiz.
- Hizkuntza Politikarako Sailordetza, *Euskararen Berripapera* [language planning news sheet; English language résumé available free of charge every six months. Subscribe at hizkpol@ej-gv.es], Eusko Jaurlaritza, Gasteiz.
- Hughes, M. (ed.) (1992) *The Challenge of Diversity*, European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages.
- Intxausti, J. (1992) *Euskal Herria/The Country of the Basque Language*, Eusko Jaurlaritzaren Argitalpen Zerbitzu Nagusia, Gasteiz.
- King, A. R. (1994) *The Basque Language: a practical introduction*, University of Nevada Press, Reno & Las Vegas.
- King, A. R. & B. Olazola (1996) *Colloquial Basque*, Routledge, London & New York.
- Lasagabaster, D. (2001) Bilingualism, Immersion Programmes and Language Learning in the Basque Country in *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* (2001: vol. 22, n°. 5, 401-425).

- Martínez-Arbeláiz, A. (1996) The Language Requirement Outside the Academic Setting: The Case of the Basque Administration in *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* (1996: vol 17, no. 5, 360-372).
- Morris, M. (1998) *Morris Student Plus (Euskara-inglesa; English-Basque)*, Klaudio Harluxet fundazioa, Donostia.
- Nelde, P., M. Strubell & G. Williams (?1995) *Euromosaic: the production and reproduction of the minority language groups of the EU*, Official Publications Office of the European Communities, Luxemburg.
- Sierra, J. & I. Olaziregi (1989) *EIFE 2: Influence of factors on the learning of Basque*, Eusko Jaurlaritzaren Argitalpen Zerbitzu Nagusia, Gasteiz (Available on request free of charge from huisseus2@ej-gv.es).
- Sierra, J. & I. Olaziregi (1991) *EIFE 3: Influence of factors on the learning of Basque*, Eusko Jaurlaritzaren Argitalpen Zerbitzu Nagusia, Gasteiz (Available on request free of charge from huisseus2@ej-gv.es).
- Stuijt, M., M. Garay, Basmoreau and T. Del.bel (1998) *The Basque language in education in France*, Mercator-Education, Ljouvert/Leeuwarden ([available on line](#)).
- Urla, J. (1988a) Language Planning: inventing new realities, in II. Euskal Mundu Biltzarra (1988: III, 139-144).
- Urla, J. (1988b) Ethnic Protest and Social Planning: a Look at Basque Language Revival, in *Cultural Anthropology* vol. 3, no. 4, (1988: 379-384), American Anthropological Association, Washington.
- Urla, J. (1989) Reinventing Basque Society: Difference and the Quest for Modernity, 1918-1936 in *Essays in Basque Social Anthropology and History* (W. Douglass ed.) 1989:149-176, University of Nevada, Reno.
- Urla, J. (1993a) Contesting Modernities in *Critique of Anthropology*, vol. 13(2): 103-121., Sage, London, Newbury Park & New Delhi.
- Urla, J. (1993b) Cultural Politics in an Age of Statistics: Numbers, Nations and the Making of Basque Identity in *American Ethnologist* (Fall, 1993).
- Valencia, J. and J. Cenoz (1992) The role of bilingualism in foreign language acquisition: Learning English in the Basque Country in *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 13, 433-49.
- Weinstein, B. (1988) Language Strategists and Political Identities in II. Euskal Mundu Biltzarra (1988: III, 173-184).
- Zalbide, M. (1992) Basque Language Loyalty at the beginning of the century: strengths and failings in Hughes (ed.) (1992: 75-112).
- Zuazo, K. (1995) The Basque Country and the Basque Language: An overview of the external History of the Basque Language in *Towards a History of the Basque Language* (Hualde J. I., J. Lakarra & R. L. Trask eds.) 1995: 5-30, John Benjamin Publishing Co., Amsterdam & Philadelphia.

[Return to table of contents](#)

2 LEARNING BASQUE

People wishing to learn Basque may use the books by King (1994) and King and Olaizola (1996) and the dictionaries by Aulestia (1989), Aulestia and White (1990) and Morris (1998). Learners who already know Spanish or French have a much wider choice of learning materials. Those wishing to take part in a course for adults or to subscribe to the learners' magazine *HABE* can contact *HABE* at the following address:

Vitoria-Gasteiz, 3
E-20009 DONOSTIA
(Spain)
Tel: +34-943-022600
Fax: +34-943-022601
Internet: <http://www.habe.org>
E-mail: habe@ej-gv.es

[Return to table of contents](#)

3 USEFUL ADDRESSES

Body	Basque Name and Address	Telephone/Fax/Internet/E-mail address
Department of Education of the Basque Government (Basque Service)	Hezkuntza Saila (Euskara Zerbitzua) Eusko Jaurlaritza E-01010 GASTEIZ	+34-945-018347 +34-945-018336 http://www1.hezkuntza.ej-gv.net huisseusk@ej-gv.es
Sub-Ministry for Language Planning of the Basque Government	Hizkuntza Politikarako Sailordetza Kultura Saila Eusko Jaurlaritza E-01010 GASTEIZ	+34-945-019522 +34-945-018082 http://www.euskadi.net/euskara/indicei_i.htm hizkpol@ej-gv.es
Directorate-General for Language Planning of the Government of Navarre	Hizkuntza Politikarako Zuzendaritza Nagusia Nabarreraia kalea 39 E-31001 IRUÑEA	+34-948-427183 or 423324 +34-948-423315 http://www.cfnavarra.es
Royal Academy of the Basque Language	Euskaltzaindia Plaza barria 15 E-48005 BILBO	+34-94-4158155 +34-94-4158144 http://www.euskaltzaindia.net info@euskaltzaindia.net
Basque publishers' association	Euskal Editoreen elkarte Zurriola hiribidea, 14-1 ezk. E-20002 DONOSTIA	+34-943-292349 +34-943-277288 eee@ctv.es
<i>Egunkaria</i> (Basque language daily newspaper)	Egunkaria Gudarien etorbidea, z/g E-20140 ANDOAIN	+34-943-300222 +34-943-300255 http://www.egunkaria.com egunkaria@jalgi.com
<i>HABE</i> (Government organisation for teaching Basque to adults)	HABE Vitoria-Gasteiz, 3 E-20009 DONOSTIA	+34-943-022600 +34-943-022601 http://www.habe.org habe@ej-gv.es
<i>UZEI</i> (Organisation for developing technical terminology)	UZEI Aldapeta 20 E-20009 DONOSTIA	+34-943-473377 +34-943-457944 http://www.uzei.com uzei@uzei.com
University of the Basque Country (Vice-rectorate for Basque)	Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea (Euskararako errektoreordetza) 1397 posta-kutxatila E-48080 BILBO	+34-94-6012040 +34-94-4646155 http://www.ehu.es lgzbalaa@lc.ehu.es
EUSTAT (Basque Statistics Office)	EUSTAT Eusko Jaurlaritza E-01010 GASTEIZ	+34-945-017517 +34-945-017501 http://www.eustat.es/english/index.html Informacion@eustat.es
Coordinating body for <i>ikastola</i> schools	EHIE Mazarredo 63-5. ezk. ezk. E-48009 BILBO	+34-94-4354343 +34-94-4354341 http://www.ikastola.net ehie@ikastola.net

[Return to table of contents](#)

4. ENGLISH LANGUAGE PUBLICATIONS

Basque Service

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH
BASQUE GOVERNMENT

Language teaching methodology collection (Glotodidaktika-lanak):
(Testing and evaluation)

33 EIFE 2 Influence of factors on the learning of Basque. (J. Sierra, I. Olaziregi) (1989)

36 EIFE-3 Influence of factors on the learning of Basque. (J. Sierra, I. Olaziregi) (1991)

In conjunction with the then Secretariat for Language Policy:

EIFE Influence of factors on the learning of Basque. (J. J. Gabiña, R. Gorostidi, R. Iruretagoiena, J. Sierra, I. Olaziregi) (1986)

To obtain copies of the above write to huisseus2@ej-gv.es

[Return to table of contents](#)