

# **TURNING KNOWLEDGE OF BASQUE INTO USE: NORMALISATION PLANS FOR SCHOOLS**

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## **Abstract:**

Once a minority language has been introduced to formal schooling, promoters are frequently dismayed by the continuing presence, even dominance, of the major language in the children's school life. In the Basque Autonomous Community (Spain) the regional Government, responsible for primary and secondary schooling, has adopted a series of measures over the past 20 years since the introduction of Basque in its schools alongside Spanish to counter this occurrence. This process has culminated in the creation of an overarching programme for the normalisation of the use of Basque in school by the name of *Ulibarri* which individual schools can opt into. After describing the context of Basque language revitalisation and the programme's antecedents, the authors offer a detailed picture of the motives, organisation and execution of the *Ulibarri* programme, together with an evaluation of results, in the belief that this programme with its mix of top-down and bottom-up language planning elements is an innovation of potential interest to other language loyalists worldwide.

## THE CONTEXT

The present revitalisation initiative for Basque, concerned with maintaining and expanding both the number of speakers and the domains in which Basque is used, got under way in the middle to late 1950s in the 20th century. An initial period, largely dependent on underfunded voluntary activity, was giving way by the end of the 1970s to a period of greater government support following the change of regime after the demise of the Spanish dictator, Franco, and the subsequent declaration in 1979 of Basque as an official language alongside Spanish in the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC), the area of Spain where most Basque speakers live. More modest initiatives were undertaken in Spanish Navarre where a small minority of Basque speakers lives, while the French state continues largely to neglect its own Basque speakers. Brief descriptions of language planning for Basque can be found in Azurmendi *et al.* (2001), Cenoz (2001), Cenoz and Perales (2000) and Gardner *et al.* (2000). The most recent survey (Eusko Jaurlaritza *et al.*, 1997) suggests that about 22.5% of the nearly 2,500,000 population of the Basque Country aged over 15 is competent at least orally in Basque. Higher percentages can be expected amongst younger members of the population. Practically all are also competent in either Spanish or French.

Efforts to reverse language shift (RLS) towards either Spanish or French have had particular impact in the educational sphere, with Basque becoming a school subject and even teaching medium on an ever-increasing scale throughout the Basque Country in primary, secondary and university teaching. Basque as subject is compulsory in both state and private primary and secondary schools in the BAC and part of neighbouring Navarre, optional (but not always freely available) in the rest of Navarre and in the French Basque Country. Basque-medium teaching is optional throughout the Basque Country, though still difficult to obtain in some areas particularly in southern Navarre and France. Availability of Basque-medium university teaching is largely limited to the BAC. The development of this bilingual educational system is discussed in Stuijt *et al.* (1998) for the French Basque Country, in Gardner (2000b) for the whole Basque area in Spain and in Gardner (2000a) and Zalvide (1990, 1999, 2000) for the BAC. Basque-language immersion education is

discussed in Arzamendi and Genesee (1997). From this point on only developments in primary and secondary education in the BAC will be considered.

In seeking to establish a bilingual education system throughout the BAC to replace the previously almost entirely monolingual system in Spanish a number of specific questions have been attended to over the last 20 years or so: changes in the law, securing a supply of teachers competent in Basque, the provision of teaching/learning materials in Basque and adding a Basque dimension to the curriculum.

The 1982 Law for the Normalisation of the Use of Basque (Basque Government, The Secretariat of Linguistic Policy, 1986) established the obligation of the public authorities in the BAC as follows:

The Government shall 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.

To achieve that end the Education Department designed three programmes or models of bilingual teaching:

- Spanish-medium teaching with Basque as a subject, widely known as model A;
- Basque- and Spanish-medium teaching with both Basque and Spanish as subjects (model B); and
- Basque-medium teaching with Spanish as a subject (model D).

Which programme a student attends depends primarily on parental choice.

The question of teacher supply in order to ensure that classes could be delivered in Basque as well as or instead of Spanish led to changes in the universities and teacher training colleges and to the creation of a large retraining system for teachers already working. Thus, Basque-speaking teachers have been trained and hired or, frequently, Spanish monolinguals have been hired and retrained to work in Basque.

The shortage of school materials of all kinds (printed, video, audio, software and CD-ROM) is gradually being overcome. A system of grants to producers helps to ensure

that the cost to parents of the materials is similar to that of equivalent materials in Spanish, thereby promoting equality of opportunity.

Languages being inevitably related to the expression of a given culture or cultures, the presence of Basque at school has induced a revision, still under way, of curriculum content, so that it reflects not only the Spanish-centred tradition but also the Basque tradition.

The BAC has thus done much of what one would expect to provide the elements necessary when a second language is introduced into an education system. The process is nevertheless far from complete.

## **PROBLEMS AND REMEDIES**

Changing a monolingual education system to a bilingual one, particularly where the new language is a lesser-used one, is a major undertaking: various problems have been detected in the process in the BAC. From early days some Basque educationists found the results of the new bilingual system unsatisfying: how was it possible that some children could spend their entire educational lives within a partially or fully Basque medium school and yet hardly ever use the Basque language? If they were not learning the language, what was missing? If they were, why were they not using it? A similar concern is often found amongst educationists from other minority backgrounds: it is usually informally phrased on the lines of ‘What language do your kids speak on the playground, then?’ Achieving spontaneous, informal use of the minority language at breaktime seems to be implicitly regarded as the acid test of successful language planning at the school level.

Zalbide (Artola *et al.*, 1991) in a book in Basque significantly titled *The School in Search of Speakers* examined some of the causes of this problem. He points to five interrelated features of pupils’ lives in explanation:

- School lessons occupy a very limited part of a child’s week. Year in, year out, model D schoolchildren spend only about 14% of their waking hours in Basque-language classroom activity; in model B the proportion drops to about

8% and in model A to around 3%. Other activities bulk far larger in the child's day, particularly with family initially, but thereafter time spent with peers increases too.

- The nature of classroom interaction tends to favour learning to listen and read and to some degree to write; pupils have relatively fewer chances to speak.
- Classroom activities tend to purvey the more formal registers of language, whereas most of the child's day outside the school requires more informal registers. One of the consequences has been the development of a new type of Basque speaker, relatively at home in formal discourse, but clumsy in informal discourse, limited in the expression of feelings and intimate interests.
- The command of Basque of the child's school interlocutors, whether teachers or peers, may be insufficient to provide quality models. In BAC schools, alongside teachers who are native speakers (or, even, exceptionally, non-native speakers) with excellent mastery of the language, can be found native speakers with limited command of the more formal registers and numerous non-native speakers with a command ranging from moderately good to frankly poor, often weakest in informal registers.
- Sociolinguistic features of the child's immediate environment have an overwhelming influence: the language of family and relatives may be Basque, Spanish or a mixture of the two; the degree of local presence of Basque can also vary tremendously. Basque speakers are in a clear majority in some rural areas and in some low-density semi-urbanised areas, but in the BAC most live in high-density areas dominated by Spanish. Thus, the starting point of children entering the education system varies considerably, on a cline from native Basque with little or no Spanish to native monolingual Spanish who may hardly have heard Basque, with all possible variants in between.

One further, more recent language pressure on children deserves mention: parental demand for more and better school English is also increasingly influencing an already crowded curriculum.

It is thus hardly surprising that some pupils fail to achieve all that some initially expected of the school system or that Basque-medium schools are frequently the place where monolingual Basques first learn Spanish.

Three phases can be distinguished in the attempt to deal with bridging the gap between knowledge and use of Basque in schools: an initial period dependent solely on the individual school's or even teacher's efforts to promote language use; a second subsequent phase of support for an increasing number of activities directed at this end by the Department of Education and finally, the introduction of planning directed at normalizing the use of Basque in individual schools. At present these three types of initiative coexist side by side. Schools are now legally bound to promote the normalisation of the use of the Basque language alongside their other objectives, but how they should achieve that goal is not specified. What inevitably varies from one school to another is the rhythm at which the goal is pursued.

Some of the earliest efforts were those of individual schools (extra-curricular activities, outings, Basque cultural and/or use weeks), some programmes spreading to more than one school. A collection of these initiatives can be found in Artola *et al.* (1991).

Education Department awareness that Basquisition of the school system could not be achieved merely by the provision of teaching of and in Basque led to the creation in 1984 of a small unit within the Department by the name of NOLEGA (two officials) to design and implement suitable complementary measures.

NOLEGA's activities have blossomed from a very modest offer back in 1984 to a published programme (Hezkuntza Saila/Departamento de Educación, 2001) for the 2001-2002 school year which includes the offer of:

- grants for drama activities, performance of traditional improvised sung verse, school choirs (in each case schools have to spend a certain time on preparation; financial assistance is to promote performance in other local schools);

- grants to promote the use of Basque in non-academic activities, at play-time, in school corridors, over the loudspeaker system, at the beginning and end of the school day, etc.;
- grants for brief stays of class-groups at residential centres to promote language use;
- grants to permit contacts between students of different sociolinguistic areas;
- through an agreement with a private association, opportunities are provided for schoolchildren to view and study films in Basque;
- through an agreement with the association of Basque authors, opportunities are provided for schoolchildren to meet well-known Basque authors, after working on their texts;
- brief stays of class-groups at Department of Education residential centres with the object of promoting language use. These centres prepare suitable training materials and offer students the opportunity to use Basque in a less academic setting;
- with regard to the quality of Basque used, prizes are awarded for secondary school students' written work and for younger students' performance in elocution;
- courses to train teachers in the specific skills needed to carry out the above activities;
- bilingual signing for schools to ensure an appropriate linguistic landscape.

By the late 1990s it was clear that, though the activities listed above were well accepted by the school population they were aimed at, both the Department and many schools felt a need for something more coherent and overarching than the piecemeal NOLEGA approach: a language plan for the individual school adapted to its context (taking into account the characteristics of the school, children and parents' command of the language, teachers' abilities and the local sociolinguistic context), needs and degree of commitment. The next section discusses how the individual school project for the normalisation of the use of Basque is carried out, whilst the following one reviews the overall organisation of the scheme, known as the *Ulibarri* programme.



## **THE INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL LANGUAGE NORMALISATION PLAN**

The initial decision to create a language plan lies with the school: it has to decide whether to respond to a Department of Education call for applications to set up a plan. The decision has at the very least to be taken in a staff meeting, though endorsement by the School Council, an elective body including representatives of teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and students, is recommended. The decision is always voluntary. Where there are Spanish monolinguals uninterested in participating, it is sometimes possible to proceed: they may vote in favour of the plan, but only participate in carrying it out in a very limited way.

Once accepted by the Department of Education, the school has to name both a steering committee for the plan (which must include at least one member of the school's management team and can also include parents and students) and a teacher as project leader. The project leader receives appropriate training before engaging on the task.

The next step is to carry out a diagnosis of the school's present language situation. Information is collected on knowledge of the language, on its presence and on its degree of use within the school by the project leader and steering committee members for each of the following categories: management team, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, pupils, parents, the school library, the linguistic landscape of the school as well as on the town or village where the school is located. In smaller schools data collection is often oral; in larger ones questionnaires designed in the school are usually used. The data are tapped into a small purpose designed computer application (Isasi & Erriondo, 2000) provided on CD-ROM with accompanying booklets to participating schools by the Department of Education.

The application provides two very different sets of results: one set deals with the overall school situation, the other with aspects of language use within individual class groups. The first part dealing with the overall school situation offers results in the shape of a number of percentages on four main topics: knowledge and presence of the language, oral use, written use and overall use. On the first topic, knowledge and presence of the language within the school, separate knowledge percentages are

provided for the management team, teachers, non-teaching staff, pupils and parents. In addition, the presence of Basque in the school library; in the linguistic landscape (visible written messages, signs and posters within the school) and, finally, knowledge of the language within the local community (based on census data) are all expressed as percentages. The oral use section provides percentages of use of Basque over all occasions of use of language, differentiating between the management team, teachers, non-teaching staff, pupils, parents and local environment. The written use section is subdivided into six sections, examining the language used in: longer internal documents, minutes of meetings, forms and certificates, office (accounting scheme, contracts, rubber stamps), correspondence (documents sent out from the school) and resources used in designing classwork (official curriculum, reports, textbooks, guide-books for teachers). The final section serves as a graphic summary of the previous data, providing overall indexes of oral and written use on the one hand and overall use as compared to knowledge and presence on the other.

In minority language situations one expects use to be lower than knowledge. After all, almost all Basque speakers in the BAC could converse in Spanish should they wish, and they inevitably do so with the Spanish monolinguals they meet. Txillardegui (1984) has developed a probabilistic mathematical model to determine the expected degree of use of a minority language once one knows the proportion of members of the relevant group who are able to speak it. In this case that model has been used to develop reference tables which permit the interpretation of the figures thrown up by the computer programme. Schools can thus determine whether, given the degree of knowledge detected, more or less Basque than one would expect is being used, thus providing a benchmark to work against.

The second set of results offers detailed information on the language dynamics of individual class-groups. Based on the work of the Catalan sociologist Arruga i Valeri (1983), class tutors gather directly or indirectly the answers of pupils to the following instructions:

- name a fellow student you always speak Basque to;
- name a fellow student you always speak Spanish to.

Results are first tabulated and then expressed graphically in the form of a sociogramme for either language. Teachers can then determine what the language behaviour of each member of the class is.

At this point the steering committee members have amassed a considerable quantity of information on language use in the school. Through the computer application they have numerical and graphic results as explained above, but they also have additional qualitative data on language choice within the school thanks to the questionnaires. Using that information and the project leader's proposals the steering committee can now start to elaborate two documents:

- the language normalisation project, which serves as a long-term five-year reference point detailing the school's ultimate language planning objectives in each of the areas mentioned above;
- the short term plan, listing objectives believed to be achievable in the new school year and the specific actions to be carried out to achieve them.

The object of the plan is not primarily to improve the way Basque is taught or the choice and sequencing of language class goals: those matters continue to be treated in the same way as any other school subject. The object is rather to increase the quality and use of the Basque language within the individual school community, whether in the classroom or outside.

Here are a few typical objectives and aims taken from real plans:

- establishing agreed rules on which language is to be used by staff to whom and when, detailing for example:
  - oral and written language to be used with both Basque- and Spanish-speaking parents;
  - how to deal with an infant bringing a Spanish-language book in to show the class;
  - what language should be used with the educational administration (more committed schools systematically return mail in Spanish to government agencies), with the local council, with trade unions, suppliers, etc.;

- whether the school will accept activities proposed by outside organisations if offered in Spanish;
- determining language profiles above legal minima to be required of staff (private sector) or attempting to influence those requirements (public sector);
- determining information on Basque language promotion to be provided to parents at different phases in their children's school careers, underlining the contribution that parents can make;
- ensuring the presence of Basque on entering and leaving school, over the loudspeaker system, on school buses, in school corridor decoration, in signing, etc.;
- adapting the school report format to reflect the importance ascribed to language use normalisation;
- revising criteria for establishing class groups within a given school year and for establishing work-groups within individual classes (using information provided by the sociogrammes) so as to promote pupil language use;
- fixing language learning objectives for staff, additional to official minima;
- organizing one-off (annual Basque weeks) or regular (extra-curricular sport or culture) activities through the medium of Basque.

The next step is approval of the plan by the relevant parties. Such a project cannot be carried out via coercive methods: agreement of participants is essential. Staff approval is necessary in all cases. The overall plan is included in the school's annual reference document. In addition, the School Council will be consulted each time a new extra-curricular or out-of-school activity is proposed. Not all schools choose to work on all the areas mentioned above. Nor, indeed, could they: schools may contain streams of different models and may, in consequence, have more or less non-Basque-speaking staff. In such cases, areas of agreement are likely to be limited and plans more modest. Once passed, both the overall project and the detailed plan for the following year have to be presented to the local language normalisation official.

In the implementation phase, lasting the remainder of the school year, the activities proposed in the plan are carried out. The activities will probably include at least some

of the activities offered in the NOLEGA programme mentioned in the previous section.

At the end of the school year, each school has to fill out a Department of Education questionnaire on the execution of the plan which serves a triple function as a record of the year's activities, as an evaluative tool and as a reflection on achievements. For each of the objectives chosen, the school must explain whether the proposed actions were satisfactorily carried out or not, what problems occurred, how the school evaluates the activities, whether the activity should be repeated or changed. The local normalisation official examines the answers, discusses matters arising with the outside consultants and provides suitable feedback to the schools, either in the course for school project leaders before the start of the next school year or in the regular meetings with them. Every year in December the local normalisation officer evaluates each school programme together with the project leader and the steering committee.

Based on the evaluation of the previous year's activities each school also has to fill out a summary sheet which will provide the basis for the plan for the following school year, leading to a repetition of some or all of the above steps. The diagnosis will be repeated every two to three years or when a major action plan has been implemented.

## **OVERALL STRUCTURE**

So far the language planning process of an individual school has been discussed. In this section the structure and organisation of the whole scheme will be described. There are basically seven types of agent or actor within the school normalisation programme:

- the programme head at the Department of Education's headquarters;
- the normalisation official coordinator;
- language normalisation officials stationed at teacher support centres round the BAC, each with their own district to serve (18);
- the three outside organisations providing consultants;
- school normalisation project leaders (305);

- individual school steering committees (305); and
- the other schoolteachers of participant schools (over 8000).

The mission and availability of each agent can be summarised as follows.

The person in charge of the whole programme works full time on overseeing the programme, is responsible for the budget, liaises with the colleague in charge of the NOLEGA programme and reports back to the head of the Basque Service in the Department of Education.

The coordinator oversees the day-to-day work of the normalisation officials and liaises with the head of programme. The post is a full-time one.

The teacher support centre normalisation officials work full time on a multi-faceted task:

- they are responsible for channelling information on relevant departmental initiatives, particularly NOLEGA ones, to the schools in their district;
- they follow the development of each school's project, offering advice and assistance;
- they detect training needs in the schools and make proposals to the consultants;
- they translate the consultants' expert advice into proposals for individual schools;
- they ensure a free flow of information between schools in each district, a task which includes selecting material for publication, and between districts at meetings with fellow officials;
- they liaise with the coordinator, the consultants and the schools;
- they evaluate the effects of every project in their district on an annual basis;
- they act as normalisation project leaders in the support centres where they are based.

These agents are regarded as being in need of further training in several or all of the following areas:

- high level of language mastery;

- some background in sociolinguistics: Basque's relationship with other languages, language planning, ways of ensuring the coexistence of languages used in the same territory;
- greater knowledge of Basque culture;
- language teaching methodology;
- awareness of the present situation of Basque language planning, in particular of other relevant initiatives;
- group management techniques;
- how to read aloud and make presentations.

The consultants work part time providing training for both support centre normalisation officials and school project leaders. Their task is to provide scientific support to the programme, creating the measuring instruments, detecting recurring problems and proposing solutions. They are also involved in preparing materials for publication.

Public-sector school normalisation project leaders have their teaching load reduced by three, six or nine hours a week, depending on the size of the school. In private schools the department makes an extra payment to the school to cover the cost of the leaders' work. They have to coordinate the gathering of information for the diagnosis of the school situation, prepare and present a project proposal, call and chair steering committee meetings, publicise relevant NOLEGA initiatives in the school, oversee the execution of the plan, liaise with the management team, provide information on their school project to other participant schools in the same district and be aware of other normalisation initiatives in the same town. They are specifically not responsible for correcting or revising the quality of language in documents produced at the school.

The school normalisation project steering committee, which usually has between two and eight members, largely depending on the size of the school, has the task of maintaining an informed overview of the situation, examining the diagnosis of the school situation, approving the proposed project, carrying it out, evaluating the results and liaising with other normalisation agents in the same town. In addition, it is

responsible for organising a system of quality control for Basque-language texts produced by adults within the school.

Other school teachers have a much more diffuse responsibility. As language is inevitably a cross-curriculum matter, ever present in all school activity, all teachers have the task of contributing to the success of the project. They are not required to set aside a specific time to deal with language normalisation, but rather to make it part and parcel of the criteria they use in participating in the life of the school.

Many schools reserve a specific role to parents, whether Basque speakers or not, given the importance (Baker, 2000: 27) of parental attitudes in influencing child language use, particularly where there is little reinforcement outside the school. In addition to their role in the family, parents may also be involved in the school as individuals, helping on special occasions or leading extra-curricular activities, as parents of children of a specific class or as members of the school's parent-teacher association.

In some secondary schools, even where staff may be reluctant to participate fully in a school project, some older pupils are showing a considerable degree of commitment: this practical experience of language planning can only be considered positively with regard to the future.

A number of developments are now under discussion: with regard to the agents, those most closely involved with the programme would like to see the number of language normalisation officials increased to deal with the considerable work load, to permit further expansion of the whole programme and to allow specialisation in either primary or secondary levels; for similar reasons, and depending on the size of the school, they look forward either to a further decrease in the teaching load of school project leaders or, in appropriate cases, the appointment of a co-leader. Further, they would like to increase the involvement of the school inspectorate and the Basque Government's institute of curriculum and evaluation. Finally, the creation of a dedicated web-site will facilitate communication of data between all parties.



## EVALUATION

Evaluating a programme like this is a complex task: one can distinguish a number of levels. First, one can evaluate the programme in itself; secondly, one can discuss its effect on the results of the education system as a whole and, finally, one can examine whether it is making a contribution to the ultimate goal of ethnolinguistic continuity. One can, moreover, distinguish further sub-levels within each of those three. For convenience we shall make use of the model developed by Zalbide (2000) for the evaluation of Basque language schooling, applying it to the *Ulibarri* programme as well. In any case, as with much Basque language planning, little formal evaluative work has been carried out. Administrative documents tend to gather information which is easily obtained, such as the numbers of participants, numbers of passes; politicians are often tempted to equate such figures with ‘success’, when in fact no measurement of the degree of achievement of a programme’s ultimate objectives has been carried out. As motivation of participants is central to success, any such analysis would have to take this variable into account.

### Evaluation of the *Ulibarri* programme

Following Zalbide’s model, one can ask whether the programme has been successful in attracting participants; whether appropriate learning has taken place and whether the projects have had an impact on the degree of use of the language.

Twenty-three schools took part in the original pilot project for the school year 1996-97. The first open call for participation was made for the following school year, when 246 schools took part. In 1998-99 a further open call brought the number of participant schools over the 300 mark. A few have since dropped out, leaving the number of participants by mid-2001 at 305. No new calls have since been published, in part because the structure set in place to run the programme is working at the limits of its capacity. About 8000 teachers are involved, over a quarter of the BAC’s ever-fluctuating total of primary and secondary teachers, and some 127,000 students, well over a third of the primary and secondary school pupil total. In short, the programme has achieved undoubted success at this level and clearly responds to a perceived need.

Client satisfaction is visible in the very small number of dropouts, due almost entirely to staff disagreements or a realisation that whatever the rhetoric the commitment was not there, and in the continuing pressure of schools to be allowed to join the programme.

It should be borne in mind that, unlike the regular school curriculum, the *Ulibarri* programme does not have specific learning objectives in mind for the pupils: it is primarily aimed at stimulating use of knowledge already obtained. On the basis of internal evaluation we can affirm that the projects have served to spur teachers on to further training: there has been a noticeable rise in the demand for high-level Basque language refresher courses and other training courses related to NOLEGA activities. Knowledge of and training in language planning criteria is gradually extending amongst support centre planning officials, school project leaders and some other schoolteachers. Through the coordination of different participants, teachers in many schools have learnt of new ways of tackling the problem of helping convert pupils' knowledge of the language into use of it. A considerable quantity of appropriate materials (e.g. materials to develop informal oral skills, glossaries for specific sports, games in Basque presented in book, tape and CD format, appropriate Internet references, Basque language Christmas cards, etc.) has been accumulated and is being made available through publication. The network of relationships developed and the structures set in place have proved extremely motivating for the agents and other participants.

But the central question at this level of analysis is whether the *Ulibarri* programme has been able to influence the degree of use of Basque by schoolchildren. The belief in participating schools, based on the annual school internal and language normalisation officials' qualitative evaluations is that it has. On the quantitative side, the diagnostic tool described above has rarely been applied more than once in its present form, as it has only recently replaced a more basic manual version: in the few places where it has been applied twice there is a clear improvement in student use of Basque.

But, of course, there are unanswered questions: for example, do schools participating in the *Ulibarri* programme have a greater degree of success in encouraging their

pupils to use Basque than those that do not? Both longitudinal case studies and research contrasting the results of participant and non-participant schools would be desirable, but the *Ulibarri* programme does not have the resources to commission such reports.

### Evaluation of Basque language schooling

Following Zalbide (2000) and leaving the evaluation of Spanish language and academic content objectives aside, we can point to a hierarchy of objectives as far as Basque itself is concerned, ranging from attracting students to partially or wholly Basque programmes of instruction, through individual language learning as reflected in school tests, to ethnolinguistic continuity initially represented by use of the language by the pupil. It is nevertheless impossible to isolate the specific contribution of the *Ulibarri* programme.

In summary, Zalbide (2000) argues that if one judges Basque-language schooling in the BAC by its ability to attract students to the partially or wholly Basque-medium educational programmes (i.e. models B and D) then it has had considerable success. In the 20-year period from the 1982-83 school year to the 2001-02 school year, the number of pupils enrolled in model A dropped from 317,761 to 98,038, while numbers rose in model B from 44,458 to 67,060 and in model D from 63,699 to 136,539. Further, the number of pupils receiving a Spanish-only education fell from 97,704 to a residual 1974. Since the passing of the Law for the Normalisation of the Use of Basque, the spread of bilingual teaching has gone through a number of phases: initially, model A spread most rapidly, replacing older programmes without Basque, while models B and D underwent a modest but continual expansion; while the presence of model A now decreases in absolute numbers and in percentage terms every year, Basque-medium programmes increase their percentage share of the student population, though due to falling rolls growth in numbers is modest and indeed has come close to a halt in model B. This spread is nevertheless uneven:

- geographically (not surprisingly, areas with a greater percentage of Basque speakers have a higher percentage of children in Basque-medium programmes);

- by age (the younger the children are, the more likely they are to be experiencing, either partially or wholly, a Basque-medium education, heralding a continuing transformation of the education system);
- by type of ownership of the school (the state-owned half of the system having a higher proportion of Basque-medium programmes than the private, but largely Government subsidised, half);
- by level of education taught (fewest Basque-medium programmes available in vocational training).

If one considers the degree of knowledge of Basque at the end of secondary schooling, this varies considerably from virtually nil to near native standard (Gabiña *et al.*, 1986; Sierra & Olaziregi, 1989, 1991a, 1991b). Ability to understand spoken and written Basque to some degree is widespread; weaknesses are more obvious in the so-called productive skills of speaking and writing. Model D has given the best results, followed by model B, while the poorest results come from model A.

When one examines the degree of use of the language by schoolchildren, one needs to distinguish native or semi-native speakers of Basque from second-language learners. The former are likely to use Basque at school, though their intonation, grammar and even pronunciation are likely to be affected by the Basque of second language learners, particularly where these are numerically dominant. As the influence of family and school wanes, the likelihood of these native speakers using Basque comes to depend more and more on relationships with peers and the presence or absence of the language in the local community. Second language speakers in model A only rarely use Basque. On the whole, those in model B use Spanish, though depending on the formal and informal learning opportunities made available to them, some become reasonably competent in Basque, even consumers of Basque cultural products, though Spanish almost always remains their dominant language. The language choices of students from model D seem to be particularly context-sensitive, depending on, amongst other factors, the dominant language of other classroom members and of friendship groups outside the school, on situational markers (location, subject and interlocutors) and on the strength of Basque in the local community.

Thus, the results at this level of analysis prove rather more sobering than the figures available on the take-up of Basque-medium programmes. Nevertheless, alongside the failures and weaknesses listed, more children fully competent and literate in Basque are now emerging from the school system than ever before (e.g. Gardner, 2000a: 65; Zalbide, 1999: 400, 2000: 52).

#### Contribution of the *Ulibarri* programme to the ultimate language revitalisation goal

BAC census figures suggest an upturn in the number of Basque speakers. This is widely attributed to the effect of Basque language schooling (e.g. Eusko Jaurlaritza, Kultura Saila, 1999: 29). Evaluations of language use (Altuna, 1998; EKBko idazkaritza teknikoa, 1991; Eusko Jaurlaritza *et al.*, 1997: 34-47; Iñigo, 1994) also suggest a net improvement. The contribution of the *Ulibarri* programme to this achievement is not easily measurable, but internal evaluations have thrown up a number of desirable outcomes outside the immediate sphere of the school:

- Given that the *Ulibarri* programme coincides with the overall government strategy for the revitalisation of Basque (Eusko Jaurlaritza, Kultura Saila, 1999), it is not surprising that synergies with other organisations promoting the use of Basque have developed on some occasions: in one town, for example, they have organized sung traditional verse and drama meetings; in another, within the framework of an overall local council plan to establish a Basque language network, parents and adolescents take part in leisure-time activities, local radio and local newspapers; in a third, a leisure-time club for children, a local magazine and a radio station have been set up. At its best, beyond sporadic events, this activity tends towards the creation of an overall plan to establish a network whereby a Basque speaker enjoys the possibility of using the language all day within the local community. The *Ulibarri* programme has, at least occasionally, been a major stepping stone in the transition from attempts at revitalisation based on schooling alone to more broadly based village and small town normalisation initiatives now just coming into existence.

- A new kind of professional Basque language loyalist is developing with increasing knowledge about how to go about promoting the use of the language.
- For perhaps the first time, a fully satisfying partnership has developed between the Department of Education and the Basque University and other bodies outside the school system in connection with the promotion of language use within schools.

## CONCLUSION

The *Ulibarri* programme, with its mixture of top-down (provision of a standard procedure to be adhered to, the diagnostic tool, reduction of project leader's workload, provision of training, consultancy and continuing support) and bottom-up planning (voluntary participation by schools, full control of the project, including the selection of appropriate goals, actions and degree of commitment, and its execution kept within the school) has proved attractive to participants. The degree of flexibility built into the programme means that no two resultant projects are identical. There is a clear sense of ownership of the project by individual school communities and a widespread belief, justified by internal evidence but still awaiting confirmation by thoroughgoing external evaluation, that individual school language normalisation projects provide a useful additional tool towards the Basque language objectives of bilingual schooling in the BAC and to the overall language revitalisation objective.

The weakness of the programme lies in the unwillingness of some sectors of the educational community, particularly among those not involved directly in schools, to integrate this tool fully into the range of ordinary school activity. In addition, it is important to be clear about what such projects can or cannot do: they can at best contribute, alongside the other basic elements of a bilingual school system listed above, to the positive outcomes of minority language schooling; they cannot overcome societal dynamics in favour of the dominant language (Fishman, 1990, 1991: 368-80; Zalbide, 2000: 52) nor can they replace the society-wide language and identity planning frequently necessary to ensure ethnolinguistic survival. Once this is

borne in mind, we suspect that other lesser-used-language communities could also find this modest, but productive tool useful after it has been suitably adapted to their own conditions.

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