

# Basque acquisition planning

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## *Abstract*

*This article describes and evaluates language planning for Basque in the educational sphere, both for literacy, maintenance or cultivation in the case of L1 speakers and for acquisition by L2 speakers. The main focus is the primary and secondary educational system in the Basque Autonomous Community, which involves larger pupil numbers and greater change in language use than in other educational sectors and other Basque speaking areas.*

## **1. Introduction**

This article focuses on language planning for Basque in the mainstream educational system (Basque for adults being dealt with in the following article). Recent discussions of the development and/or evaluation of the bilingual educational system include Etxeberria (1999) and, very briefly, Azurmendi et al. (2001: 243–244, 254) for the whole of the Basque Country, Stuijt et al. (1998) for the Northern Basque Country, Gardner (2000a) for the whole Basque area in Spain, and Gardner (2000b, 2002), Zalbide (1999, 2000) and Lasagabaster (2001) for the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC). Though attempts to use Basque for school based educational purposes started well over a century ago (Zalbide 1990), they can be considered marginal until the present initiative got under way in the early 1960s, since when education has been the main motor of Basque revitalization efforts. Although the presence of Basque in other sectors (particularly media, administration, cultural and leisure activities) has developed considerably over the past few years, education continues to be the most important sector of Basque language planning, in terms of volume of activity, numbers of participants involved and amount of Government funding available, and also the most successful

Table 1. *Basque-medium pupils by administrative area (1998–1999)*

	Numbers of pupils receiving at least some instruction through medium of Basque	Basque-medium pupils as percentage of total number of pupils within the corresponding administrative area
BAC	191,108	58%
Navarre	15,021	18%
Northern Basque Country	4,013	16%

in terms of gains in language maintenance and acquisition. It is virtually the only area of planning for provision of Basque language services with a substantial proven demand which is moreover still increasing in relative terms. Indeed, the potentially excessive preponderance of the educational sector has been warned against on more than one occasion (e.g., Fishman 1990; 1991: 368–380).

The present tripartite administrative division of the Basque Country (BAC, Navarre and Northern or French Basque Country) must be borne in mind when discussing education, as a single, different authority is responsible in each. Though the Basque language is offered as both subject matter and teaching medium in all three areas, the relative weight of their respective contributions is very different, as can be seen from Table 1, which shows the number of primary and secondary pupils receiving at least part of their education through the medium of Basque in the school year 1998–1999 (data from a year earlier in the French case).

For reasons of volume and relative weight of pupils, the preponderance of the BAC in RLS-for-Basque language policy and space constraints on the present article, subsequent discussion will be centred on the BAC, the main source of initiatives in the educational planning sphere. For similar reasons attention will be paid to primary and secondary education rather than to university education, where Basque is a well established subject and where Basque-medium teaching is also expanding.

## 2. Description

The following discussion draws substantially on Gardner (2002). Initially clandestine and later grudgingly tolerated type 4a Basque-medium schools (Fishman 1991: 100) were set up by private initiative in the sixties and seventies toward the end of the Francoist dictatorship. In spite of the small numbers involved these *ikastola* schools provided an important precedent: they were innovative in methodology to deal with increasingly

mixed mother-tongue classes and in the bilingual language competence required of staff (Departamento de Educación, Universidades e Investigación 1990: 12), resourceful in creating teaching and learning materials on a shoestring and trailblazers in Basque terminological development. Above all, they proved that Basque-medium schooling was possible late in the twentieth century. Interim legislation after Franco's death allowed these schools access to public funds, at the same time as a small number of local state and private schools also started to provide Basque language lessons and even some Basque-medium teaching. Type 4a schools were thus rapidly replaced by type 4b, though the fact that the educational administration is partly in the hands of Basque language loyalists and that some Basque-medium schools are privately owned lead us to agree with Hornberger and King (2001: 181) that "the two GIDS sub-stages may be insufficient to capture the diverse configurations of community and government involvement in education."

The subsequent transformation of the system can be seen as depending on five major sets of measures, aimed at securing:

- legal changes;
- provision of appropriate material resources;
- the training and hiring of adequate human resources;
- management of change; and
- the resolution of interrelated pedagogical, curriculum and organizational issues.

Before discussing those changes in detail, however, it is essential to indicate some of the contextual constraints affecting the inevitably gradual implementation of the new bilingual system: first and foremost has been the fall in birth rate (around 40,000 births in the BAC during the seventies until 1977 compared with an average of about 16,000 throughout the 1990s), leading to a major contraction in the size of the education system. Falling rolls have brought about first a welcome reduction in class sizes but more recently a surplus of teachers, particularly of monolingual Spanish speakers whilst hiring of new teachers has largely been curtailed. Falling rolls also mean shorter print runs for school materials, reducing their profitability and, in the case of Basque, their viability; they ease the qualified Basque speaking teacher shortage and they reduce the efficaciousness of school based acquisition planning within society as a whole as youngsters form an ever-decreasing proportion of society.

Other contextual features with both positive and negative effects on the rate of bilingualization of the school system include:

- creativity within the educational system to deal with novel situations;
- ability to provide concrete solutions to specific problems as they arise;

- continuing parental pressure for Basque-medium educational options;
- belated planning: the Basque Government did not expect change to be so rapid or so far-going;
- both resistance to and support for the bilingualization of the education system from within its political and administrative apparatus;
- the rigidity of the educational labor market, particularly in the public sector, which constitutes about 50% of the whole;
- teacher trade union pressure in defence of teachers' interests;
- the tense political situation, leading not infrequently to a degree of administrative paralysis as well as to a gradual crumbling of the relative consensus on language policy which existed after Franco's death.

After this brief review of the main features of the context of educational language planning for Basque in BAC schools, the five sets of measures taken can now be discussed.

### 2.1. *Legal measures*

The declaration of Basque as an official language in the BAC in 1979 (Berriatua 1983) paved the way for the 1982 Law for the Standardization of the Use of Basque (Basque Government 1986) which in turn led to a 1983 Basque Government bilingualism decree (Herri Arduralaritzaren Euskal Erakundea 1986: 97–101) establishing the present bilingual educational options in the primary and secondary spheres and in many ways confirming practice to date, as well as preparing for the gradual transformation of a primarily monolingual educational system into a bilingual one. Basque as a subject was phased in for almost all pupils over a few years, while the opening of Basque-medium streams depended more directly on parental demand. Basic legal changes can be summed up, however, in just three measures:

- parents (or, in certain circumstances, guardians or the students themselves) were given the right to determine the official language (Basque or Spanish) to be used to educate their children;
- an obligation was laid on the government to satisfy parental requirements;
- the government defined the options available to parents:
  - Basque-medium education with Spanish as subject (“model D”);
  - Spanish-medium education with Basque as subject (“model A”);
  - and
  - a half-and-half option with both Spanish and Basque as subject and medium (“model B”).

All other legal changes (for example, language profile requirements for prospective teachers) can be regarded as depending on these three elements. The substitution of the 1983 decree by a law on Basque schooling in 1993 (Hezkuntza, Unibertsitate eta Ikerketa Saila 1999: 119–170) did not bring about substantial change with regard to these three primary features, though it did put an end to the existence of the separate *ikastola* sector, with individual *ikastola* schools choosing to integrate in either the public or private sectors.

## 2.2. *Material resources*

Provision of material resources refers not so much to buildings (as new Basque-language streams are often installed in existing premises) as to teaching and learning materials. The regional government has promoted materials production in a number of ways, by:

- supporting terminological development;
- giving grants to groups of teachers writing materials;
- subsidizing the production costs of school textbooks and other printed materials, audio and audio-visual materials, educational software and CD-ROMs, whether original or in translation;
- controlling the quality of Basque in materials produced;
- cataloguing them and
- awarding prizes for outstanding materials.

The prime justification for this financial support lies in the principle of equality of opportunity: a Basque-medium education should not be a greater financial burden to parents who have to purchase learning materials, than a Spanish-medium one.

## 2.3. *Personnel*

Perhaps the most difficult question to deal with has been that of securing an adequate supply of suitably qualified teachers. Both public and private sector initial training options have been restructured to ensure that at least part of those training within the BAC are competent to teach in Basque. However, both public and private sector schools have become increasingly reliant on in-service language retraining in Basque for practising teachers, whether native speakers or not, with most falling in the latter category. As a result the Basque Government's Department of Education provides a sophisticated language retraining programme (e.g.,

Hezkuntza Saila/Departamento de Educación 2002), offering at its height up to three years of full-time paid release and payment of enrolment fees to well over a thousand teachers per school year (2001–2002: about 700), with costs of the substitute supply teacher also being covered in whole (public sector) or part (private sector: at least 80%). Criteria for entry to such courses (which teachers, what initial level of Basque) have given rise to dispute, as have exit levels (nature and level of language examination certifying competence to teach in Basque, role of continuous assessment): these criteria have been one of the points of dispute between differing interest groups. Other aspects of in-service teacher training could potentially provide indirect language training if carried out through the medium of Basque, but the Department has made little use of this option. Some attention has been paid to the Basque language competence of non-teaching staff.

#### 2.4. *Management of change*

Management of change is particularly delicate: though some entirely new Basque-medium schools have been set up in the public sector, whether in reconverted or custom-built buildings, the most commonly used procedure has been that of gradual reconversion of an existing school. In the private sector some schools initiated a reconversion process early on at least partly for ideological reasons; others simply wished to ensure a continuing flow of students, as parents opted for the two models with substantial Basque-medium teaching. In the state sector reconversion processes were initiated on the basis of predicted or proven parental demand. Where schools did not actively seek to establish a model B or D stream (a decision ultimately in the hands of the Government), school inspectors would sound school staff out, pointing out the pressures on the educational system and the training possibilities for teachers. Where a school accepted the introduction of a Basque-medium stream, there would at best already be a teacher with proven competence in Basque ready to take on the Basque-medium teaching in the new class, while other teachers completed their language training or started learning Basque from scratch. As a result teachers have sometimes found themselves under considerable pressure. The Basque Government has been generous in its provision of retraining facilities, but has provided relatively few other options for monolingual Spaniards. Measures which have been debated have in any case often been found to involve a scissor effect: increasing, say, job options for Spanish speakers in schools often

implies an increase in the need for Basque speakers as well, thereby partially worsening a situation the measure was intended to alleviate.

### *2.5. Pedagogical, curricular and organizational issues*

Finally, numerous interrelated pedagogical, curricular and organizational issues have required attention, for example:

- (in model D) whether to mix children from Basque speaking families (usually with varying degrees of competence in Spanish) and Spanish speaking families in the same class, when Spanish should be introduced as a subject, how to introduce native speakers with a home dialect far removed from the written standard to literacy, levels of Basque language competence to be required of teachers of languages other than Basque;
- (in model B) what language children should learn to read and write in, when Spanish should be introduced as a subject, which subjects should be taught in Spanish and which in Basque, whether teachers giving lessons through the medium of Basque should also give lessons through the medium of Spanish or should children associate one language with one person, what age should model B be available up to, how many teachers on a school's staff should be qualified to teach in Basque;
- (in model A) whether some subject teaching should be through the medium of Basque, which is the most appropriate teaching methodology, how far trends in teaching should be accommodated;
- (in all models) how the models should be integrated in the life of the school, what space should be given to English, the difficulty in ensuring the opportunity for students to study the language continuously in an articulated manner (cf. Kaplan and Baldauf 1997: 152).

For further discussion of some aspects see Arzamendi and Genesee (1997). On the whole, the Department of Education has at best given general guidelines for most of these topics, leaving the final resolution in the hands of individual school staff. Its direct intervention at this level has been primarily concerned with just three topics:

- staffing arrangements, due to the difficulty in finding sufficient competent qualified staff to teach in Basque;
- the definition of the curriculum itself (in conjunction with the central Spanish government), to ensure, amongst other things, the development of a Basque dimension alongside the existing Spanish one;

- the integration of the bilingual teaching models in the general run of school life.

The latter point needs further elaboration:

- initially, school bilingualization seems to have been seen purely in terms of establishing the models and teaching school subjects according to the *curriculum*;
- that initial approach is still maintained in some schools, while others have felt the need to establish a specific language project as part of the document that reflects the school's educational project: at its best, the *language project* tries to specify a single set of methodological coordinates for the teaching of the two official languages and the other modern language(s) offered in the school, the object being to ensure that all the language teachers are pulling in the same methodological direction. The document should clarify the role of each of the school's languages. In the case of model B streams the project may also make public information about the school's response to the various pedagogical issues mentioned above;
- in addition, primary schools are increasingly offering an *early start in English*, which leads to a redistribution of school time, especially where English is used as medium for some activities. Discussion of this topic can be found in Cenoz (1998), Cenoz and Jessner (2000), Cenoz and Lindsay (1994), Cenoz and Valencia (1994) and Cenoz et al. (2001);
- further, since 1983 the education system is required (since 1993 this obligation corresponds by law to individual schools) to adopt the positive measures necessary to contribute to Basque language normalization. Many schools do this by adopting a *Basque language normalization project*. These projects, in effect micro language policy making for individual schools, have arisen from a widespread awareness that schools need consciously to revise their language behavior to ensure that all possible stimuli are being provided to pupils not only to learn the language, but to use it. Detailed discussion of these projects is available in Aldekoa and Gardner (2002). They involve analyzing present knowledge and use of Basque in a given school community, designing suitable objectives for a five year period, implementing annual plans to achieve those objectives and evaluating progress in promoting student language use. The project leader, a teacher, has his/her teaching load reduced, a school-internal steering committee is established, the Department provides grants for specific actions (Hezkuntza Saila 2001) and trained advisors to follow up project design



and implementation. First results of this combination of top-down and bottom-up planning are proving promising.

In short, what was initially presented as a very straightforward choice between three definitions (A, B, D) of the relevant weight of the two official languages as the medium of teaching has gradually come to affect a broad spectrum of aspects of school organization.

### 3. Evaluation

The battery of measures described in section 2 has had a major effect on the linguistic configuration of preuniversity schooling in the BAC. The rest of the paper is devoted to evaluating that effect. Leaving the question of cost effectiveness, discussed in Grin and Vaillancourt (1999), aside, four areas of achievement will be considered, borrowing from Gardner (2002) for the first three and following the model proposed by Zalbide (2000) for the last:

- the BAC government's Department of Education;
- the model system itself;
- teachers;
- students.

#### 3.1. *Department of Education*

How far has the Department of Education fulfilled the task laid upon it to provide education in the two official languages of the BAC according to parents' wishes? As can be seen in section 3.4 on student achievement, the change in the system has been remarkable and to that degree the Department has clearly fulfilled its obligations: parents can by and large obtain schooling for their offspring in the model they require, though difficulties can arise in rural areas where not enough students of a particular model are available to contemplate opening a class group. There are nevertheless a number of weaknesses waiting to be addressed, for example:

- the excessive reliance on staff with a command of the language falling short of the maximum desirable, inevitably limiting results to some degree;
- the failure so far to develop a full Basque dimension to the curriculum;
- the nonavailability of model D on many further education courses;

- the lack of academic evaluation of many of the initiatives undertaken; and
- the dearth of mechanisms above the level of the individual school to improve quality in delivery of the bilingual system.

### 3.2. *The bilingual models*

Are the models a satisfactory way of channelling demand for bilingual education? Within the BAC they have been questioned almost from the start, among other things because their centrally planned nature runs counter to the growing belief in and push towards increasing the autonomy of the individual school at the economic, pedagogical and organizational levels.

However, the administrative and social value of a relatively clear-cut system of models cannot be overstressed:

- it has provided a flexible response to parental demand, thereby assisting in the reduction of tension. As such it is a basically democratic system;
- its centrally planned nature means that parental choice can be fully taken into account, something less likely to occur if decisions were to be left to individual schools, readier especially in the past perhaps to give excessive weight to the interests of practising monolingual teachers;
- it is a system whose operational conditions can be defined to the degree deemed necessary (more and stricter definition initially in the case of the BAC when resources were short), whether a matter of language criteria for staffing ratios, definition of subjects to be taught in one or other language, minimum numbers required to open a class;
- it is a system that can be planned (calculations of expected student distribution; degree to which models can be made available to parents, where and when; calculations of teacher shortage by subject; organization of language training of teachers);
- even allowing for the considerable variation in model B, it is a system that can be explained with relative ease to the parent–consumer;
- model B is of particular importance as a halfway house for monolingual Spanish parents who wish their children to obtain Basque language skills but are, quite reasonably, unwilling to send their children to model D until they are absolutely sure that they are not prejudicing their children’s future. As parental confidence in model D has increased, model B has virtually ceased to grow.

Table 2. *Percentage of BAC teachers qualified to teach in Basque (2002)*

Level taught	Percentage of teachers with tenure qualified to teach in Basque		
	State	Private	All
Primary (2/3–12)	77.3	67.8	73.2
Statutory secondary (12–16)	76.9	60.3	66.1
Post statutory secondary (16+)	59.6	45.7	54.3
All teachers	68.8	56.3	63

*Note:* The category ‘all teachers’ also includes primary and secondary teachers for adults, support services (except administration), some SEN workers and so on.

### 3.3. *Teachers*

Evaluation of teacher Basquization needs to be tackled on more than one level. Here four will be considered:

- numbers qualified to teach in Basque;
- quality of teachers’ Basque;
- use of the language by teachers and
- their contribution to the achievement of overall language planning objectives.

In 1976 a survey of state primary teachers in the BAC and Navarre calculated that a mere 5% of practising teachers knew Basque (SIADeco 1978: 53). Teaching through the medium of Basque was practically confined to the *ikastola* schools which at their height probably never constituted more than about 10% of the system. The degree of success in terms of teachers qualifying to teach in Basque is remarkable: the figures for teachers with tenure at the beginning of 2002 can be seen in Table 2.

Not all those teachers necessarily teach in Basque though most do for at least a part of their working day. Figures for supply teachers are usually a few percentage points higher in each category.

As to the quality of teachers’ Basque a broad range of competence can be observed:

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 (Aldekoa and Gardner 2002: 341).

As to the use of the language by teachers qualified to teach in Basque, it seems that by and large they speak in Basque to their students, but that in some schools use of Basque in the staff room is rather more limited.

The contribution made by teachers to overall acquisition planning objectives is evident from the figures in the next subsection: the Basque Government could never have achieved such a change in the system without the active and enthusiastic participation of many teachers. The expansion of a Basque-medium education sector has given rise to a considerable number of direct teaching jobs and indirect posts in the service sector: such an increase in the jobs specifically open to Basque speakers represents a welcome improvement in the societal reward system which helps to sustain the language.

### 3.4. *Students*

The overt objective of any education system is that of providing a suitable preparation to its students, in this case in the two official languages. Any evaluation of the system must necessarily review achievement in this sphere. Discussion here will be based on the following three questions:

- to what degree has the governmental offer of bilingual schooling been taken up?
- how much Basque have pupils learnt?
- how much Basque do students use?

In response to the first question Figure 1 shows how BAC primary and secondary students have been distributed between the different models over the last twenty years.

Students in model X (i.e., without Basque even as a subject) are only residual within the system. Model A, after a phase of initial expansion, is now undergoing continual decline, notably faster than the fall in rolls, whilst the models offering Basque-medium education in whole or part (B and D) have undergone gradual expansion with D becoming increasingly popular in comparison to B. Given the considerable reduction in the volume of pupils, Figure 2, which shows the percentage of pupils in a given school year in each model, will help shed further light on the change in teaching medium wrought over the past twenty years.

If, instead of presenting a diachronic picture of developments, we look at different age cohorts within the same school year, as in Table 3, which lists numbers of students in the initial year of each of the four major divisions of primary and secondary education in 1998–99, potential for further transformation of the system can be observed.

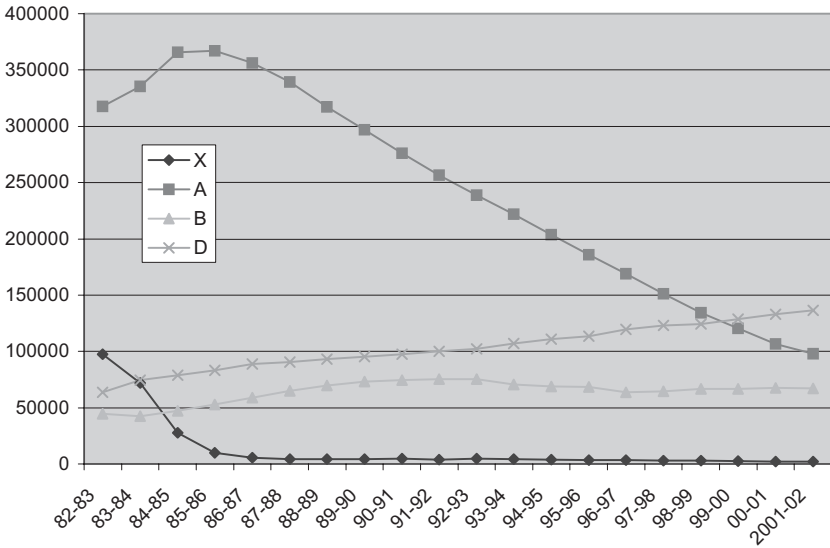


Figure 1. *Distribution of BAC primary and secondary pupils by model, 1982–2001*

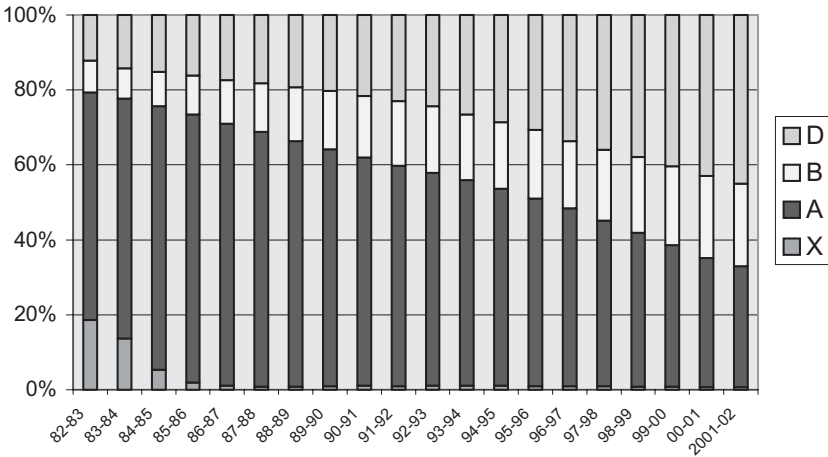


Figure 2. *Percentage distribution of BAC primary and secondary pupils by model, 1982–2001*

Age cohorts decrease notably in size due to falling rolls with the result that changes in percentage shares and in absolute numbers from oldest to youngest cohort in individual models suggest very different conclusions. The drop in numbers in model A to roughly a tenth is masked somewhat

Table 3. *Distribution of students of given ages in the BAC in 1998–1999 by model*

Pupil age	Total students	<i>Model X</i>		<i>Model A</i>		<i>Model B</i>		<i>Model D</i>	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
16	30,183	51	0	21,891	73	298	1	7,869	26
12	19,572	162	1	6,899	35	4,931	25	7,580	39
6	16,217	136	1	3,239	20	4,707	29	8,135	50
3	15,384	125	1	1,963	13	4,674	31	8,482	55

by the percentage share which has fallen only to about a sixth. Similarly, the notable rise in percentage share in model D (more than double) in fact masks a very modest increase of a few hundred in pupil numbers at age 3. Even taking into account leakage from B and D towards A as students grow older, it is nevertheless clear that model D is replacing model A as parental favorite, whether children have Basque as L1 or L2. Further growth in the relative weight of model D (and B) can be expected, though in absolute terms it will be very modest. Given these figures, it is hardly surprising that the spread of Basque language schooling over the last quarter of a century is frequently regarded as a success both within and outside the Basque Country.

We turn now to the question of whether these students are successful learners of Basque and whether they learn it as well as Spanish. These topics are discussed in detail in Gabiña et al. (1986) and Sierra and Olaziregi (1989, 1991a, 1991b). While, with the possible exception of some recent North African immigrants, students display on the whole an acceptable level of competence in Spanish by the end of their secondary studies, achievement in Basque is very varied, from near-zero ability (particularly but not only model A students) to well schooled native or native-like competence, with most students falling somewhere in between. On the whole, students' productive abilities are weaker than their receptive ones, unless family, neighborhood and local community provide additional support: school cannot, on its own, turn children with Basque as L2 (the case of three out of four new entrants) into full, self-sufficient contributors to RLS. In short, the Basque case is further proof that the school is a secondary, not a primary, reward system (Fishman et al. 1985: 369). Not surprisingly, choice of model is a major influence on outcomes both because of the differing degree of exposure to Basque (approximately 3% of a model A student's waking hours, 8% in model B and 14% in model D according to Zalbide (1991: 19–25)) and because of differing quality of exposure (whether Basque is subject only or also medium). At best,

- School does make a major contribution to converting Spanish mother-tongue children into balanced bilinguals and
- To enriching and enhancing L1 speakers' command of the language, acting as a bridge between local dialect and the standard;
- The school can equally provide a Basque dimension to the curriculum, going beyond mere language teaching to provide a model of Basqueness with the attendant awareness of the nature of the group and its goals, as well as its geo-historical and sociocultural dimensions;
- Finally, the school is the source of the next generation of Basque-speaking elites.

It still has some way to go, however, in fulfilling these four roles satisfactorily.

The final question with regard to schoolchildren is also the most important from an RLS perspective: do the young adults who have passed through this bilingual schooling system use Basque and thus contribute to its continuity? L1 speakers of Basque attend model D in the main. Basque is their usual language with teachers and schoolfriends, but the presence of L2 speakers in the class may have a negative effect on their pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary and grammar and lead in specific cases to the use of Spanish. As these children grow, they are increasingly influenced by local practice: in strongly Basque speaking areas, they too will tend to use Basque for an extended range of functions, and vice versa. The language use of L2 speakers of Basque, the majority, depends in part on model: model A students' dominant language is invariably Spanish; at best, they may make some use of receptive skills with, say, Basque language radio or TV; model B students may in some cases become consumers of Basque language cultural products, but will not normally be active users of Basque unless there is some societal pressure to become so; model D students may, depending on a host of situational/environmental factors, become active users of Basque. It is here that the limitations of the school in RLS become most evident: the models are only one factor, often not even the most important one, in determining students' subsequent language use. Nevertheless, it is clear that the number of people claiming knowledge of Basque is on the increase and this is widely attributed to schooling (e.g., Euskadiko Eskola Kontseilua 2001: 28).

#### **4. Conclusion**

Basque as subject and Basque medium education have expanded remarkably over the last forty years and may well expand further in the future in

all three administrative areas and at all educational levels, though not without additional challenges from the language of wider communication, English, and from new immigrant languages, particularly Arabic. Basque medium education, in particular, has brought about a notable increase in knowledge of the Basque language, though advances in its use are more modest. From an RLS perspective, while recognizing the importance and relative success of the Basque educational language planning initiative, stress needs to be placed on developments outside the school community: in spite of major investment in language planning outside the school sphere, little work is at present being done to ensure that the education initiative feeds back into intergenerational language transmission; relatively few steps have been taken to ensure the continuation of the work of the school into the Basque speaker's adult life at home and in the local community. As things stand and even bearing in mind the limitations of the education initiative listed above, the bottleneck for Basque RLS lies outside the school rather than within it. If a more appropriate prioritization of objectives were achieved outside the school, it would still remain to be seen whether Basque could finally halt its now slowing downward slide and achieve relative stability and health. If it does succeed, education will have played no small part.

*Basque Government*

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