

Mikel Martínez-Areta (ed.)

# Basque and Proto-Basque

Language-Internal and Typological Approaches  
to Linguistic Reconstruction

**Mikroglottika**

Minority Language Studies

Volume 5



PETER LANG  
EDITION

## Basque and Proto-Basque

# Mikroglottika

Minority Language Studies

Volume 5



PETER LANG  
EDITION

Mikel Martínez-Areta (ed.)

# Basque and Proto-Basque

Language-Internal and Typological Approaches  
to Linguistic Reconstruction



PETER LANG  
EDITION

**Bibliographic Information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek**

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available in the internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

This Publication was sponsored by



**EUSKO JAURLARITZA**  
**GOBIERNO VASCO**

KULTURA SAILA  
DEPARTAMENTO DE CULTURA

E-ISBN 978-3-653-02701-3 (E-Book)

DOI 10.3726/978-3-653-02701-3

ISSN 1867-190X

ISBN 978-3-631-62649-8

© Peter Lang GmbH

Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften

Frankfurt am Main 2013

All rights reserved.

Peter Lang Edition is an Imprint of Peter Lang GmbH

All parts of this publication are protected by copyright. Any utilisation outside the strict limits of the copyright law, without the permission of the publisher, is forbidden and liable to prosecution. This applies in particular to reproductions, translations, microfilming, and storage and processing in electronic retrieval systems.

[www.peterlang.de](http://www.peterlang.de)

# Hitzaurrea

*Blanca Urgell*

*(Kultura Sailburua, Eusko Jaurlaritza)*

Euskara eta haren historia ikertzen aurrerapauso ikusgarriak izan dira azken hamarkadetan. Euskararen bilakaera inoiz baino hobeto ulertzen dugu orain, eta hizkuntza bera osatzen dituzten egiturak nondik eta nola sortu diren zehazteko hipotesi sendo bezain emankorrak garatu ditu euskalaritzak. Ikerketa metodoak eta tresnak hobetuz eta homologatuz joan dira hizkuntzaren iraganetik ahalik eta informazio aberatsena eskuratu nahirik. Koldo Mitxelenak aldarrikatu zuen, bestela maisutzat zeukan Antoine Meilletek esandakoaren aurka, euskara ez dela inola ere historiarik gabeko hizkuntza bat, haren isolamendu genetikoak (ez baitu akitanieraz beste ahaide ezagunik) ez dituela bilakaera historikoa azaltzeko bideak agortzen. Aitzitik, beste hizkuntzetatik hartu dituen maileguetan eta barneberreraiketaren metodoan oinarrituta, euskarak igaro dituen garapen-garaiei buruz datu ugari jaso ditzakegu, hizkuntzaren oraina ere ulertzeko baliagarri direnak.

Mitxelenak erein zuen lur zabalean bildutako uzta esanguratsua da bai kopuruz bai kalitatez, maisu handiak ezarri zituen oinarrien sendotasunaren seinale. Hizkuntzaren alor guztietan, fonologiatik lexikora, aurreratu dugu gure ezagutzan, eta aspaldi iritsi zitzaigun garaia ikertutakoa zabaltzeko, gurean ez ezik baita mundu osoan ere. Euskarak beti jakin-min itzela piztu baitu atzerrian, dela bere gramatikaren ezaugarriengatik, dela Europako hizkuntzen mapan eta haren historiaurrean duen toki bereziarengatik. Ingelesez ez dira gutxi orain arte argitaratu diren lanak, Mitxelenaren garaitik hasita, baina haien artean gero eta gehiago dira erreferentziazko lantzat hartzeko modukoak, tartean gramatika deskribatzaileak edo euskararen historiari buruzko monografiak, guztiak gaur egun nazioartean oso erabiliak, hala nola José Ignacio Hualde eta Jon Ortiz de Urbinaen *A Grammar of Basque* (New York, Mouton de Gruyter, 2003) edo Robert L. Trasken *The History of Basque* (Londres, Routledge, 1997).

Orain esku artean duzun liburua, irakurle, kate oraingoz labur horretako beste begi bat da, eta ez nolana hiko. Izan ere, euskararen gramatika historikoa izateko orain arte egin diren ahalegin sakonenetako bat dela baieztatu dezakegu gehiegikerietan erortzeko arriskurik gabe. Sintesitik duen bezala, ikerketa berri eta berritzailetik ere asko du, eta euskararen iraganera hurbiltzeko saio egiatan iradokitzaileak bildu ditu bere orrialdeetara. Liburua idatzi duen hizkuntzalari taldeak, bestalde, eskarmentua eta gaztetasuna batzen ditu: ikertzaile gazte askoren parte hartzea pozgarria da diziplinaren jarraikotasunaren ikuspegitik.

Euskararen historiak ez du inoiz izan horrenbeste aditu, eta gaurko joerari eusten bazaio, aurrerantzean ere hizkuntzaren iraganari buruzko ikerketak luzaz egingo dira. Asko dago oraindik argitzeko, ezagutzen dugun historia luzea baita, baina are luzeagoa ezagutzen ez duguna, historiaurrearen laino artean galduz joan zaiguna. Behin iraganean murgilduta, garbi izan behar dugu dena ezingo dugula berreskuratu (aurkakoa pentsatzea frustraziorako bide ezinago zuzena da), baina era berean egia da egungo gure lanabesek eta ereduak euskararen bilakabidea nolakoa izan ote zen irudikatzeko eszenatoki arrazoizkoak eskaintzen dizkigutela, beste hizkuntzetan gertatutakoa aintzat harturik eta *tipologia diakronikoa* deritzonak ematen dizkigun datuetan oinarrituta.

Oraindik neurri batean zein bestean argitzeke dauzkagun hainbat esparrutan Mikel Martínez-Areta UPV/EHUko irakasleak koordinatu duen lan honek euskalaritzaren tradizioz onenean bikain errotutako ideia eta proposamen berri ugari dakarzkigu, euskararen garai zaharretan izandako edo izan zitezkeen aldaketak hobeto ulertu eta azaltzen lagun diezaguketenak. Ez da meritu makala, gaian sakontzeko euskarak ez baitigu maizenik zuzeneko lekukotasun gehiegi ematen, eta horregatik iturririk ezak zurtz sentiarazten du askotan ikertzailea. Hizkuntzalaritzaren egungo garapen-mailak garbi ezartzen ditu, baita gurean ere, ongi arrazoitutako hipotesi sendoen eta hala-holako azalpenen arteko mugak. Euskararen historiari (eta batez ere historiaurreari) dagokionez, bigarrenek merezi zutenaren gaisetiko oihartzuna lortu izan dute sarriegi. Orain aurkezten duguna bezalako lan akademiko serioek, ordea, euskararen iraganaren ezagutzan aurrera irmoki egiteko aukera ematen dute. Norabide horri, hain zuzen, eutsi behar diogu, euskararen gramatika historiko osoa mamitu eta gauzatuko badugu. Hara iristeko oraindik bidean goazela, ziur nago liburu honek (*Basque and Proto-Basque. Language-Internal and Typological Approaches to Linguistic Reconstruction*) helburutik oso gertu utziko gaituela.

## Foreword

*Blanca Urgell*

*(Minister of Culture, Basque Government)*

In recent decades, considerable progress has been made in research on the Basque language and its history. Today, we understand the development of Basque better than ever before, and Bascologists have proposed solid and fruitful hypotheses. Research methods and tools have progressively improved and been standardized in order to obtain the richest possible information from the language's past. Luis Michelena stated —contradicting on this point Antoine Meillet, whom he otherwise considered his master— that Basque is in no way a language without history, and that its genetic isolation —i.e. its lack of known relatives other than Aquitanian— does not exhaust the paths of explanation for historical change. Quite the contrary: building upon both loan words borrowed from other languages and the method of internal reconstruction, we can collect plentiful data about the different periods of development undergone by the Basque language, which can also be useful to understand the present of the language.

The harvest gathered in throughout the extensive land sown by Michelena is considerable in both quantitative and qualitative terms, which proves the solidity of the bases established by the great master. From phonology to lexicon, we have increased our knowledge in every realm of the language, and the time has long since come to divulge what has been discovered, not only among Bascologists but on a wider stage. In fact, Basque has always triggered curiosity beyond our borders, be it due to its grammatical features, or to its special position within the map of the languages of Europe and its prehistory. Since Michelena's times, the amount of works published about Basque in English is considerable, among them a growing number of reference books including internationally well-known works such as *A Grammar of Basque* (New York, Mouton de Gruyter, 2003), edited by José Ignacio Hualde and Jon Ortiz de Urbina, or Robert L. Trask's *The History of Basque* (London, Routledge, 1997).

The book that the reader has in his/her hands is another link in this still relatively short chain, and not just any link. In fact, we can safely assert that it represents one of the most serious attempts made thus far at a historical grammar of Basque. Whilst it has an element of synthesis, it also brings together a great deal of new and innovative research, and thus constitutes a really suggestive attempt to bring us closer to the past of the language. The group of linguists who have written the book combines experience and youth, and indeed, the participation in

it of so many young scholars is very good news for the continuation of the discipline. The history of Basque has never had as many experts as it has today, and, if this trend continues, research on the past of the language will certainly be carried out for a long time in the future. There are many questions still to be resolved, as the known history of the language is long. However, the history that we do not know, that which is lost in the mists of time, is even longer. Once we plunge into the past of the language, we must bear in mind that we shall never recover everything (thinking otherwise is the shortest route to frustration). But it is also true that the linguistic tools and reconstruction models that we have at our disposal today allow us the possibility to conceive, within certain limits, reasonable scenarios as to how the development of the language may have occurred, taking as a model what has been done in the parallel research of other languages, and based on the data provided by the so-called *diachronic typology*.

This work, coordinated by the Assistant Professor of the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) Mikel Martínez-Areta, brings us new ideas and proposals, well entrenched in the best tradition of Bascology, on a number of unresolved questions, thus helping us to better understand and explain the changes which took place or may have taken place in the old periods of the language. This is no mean feat, as most of the time the Basque language offers little direct evidence, and that lack of sources often causes the scholar to feel orphaned. The current state of linguistics clearly establishes, also within our field, the limits between well-argued strong hypotheses and unsound explanations. Worryingly, however, with regards to the history, and especially the prehistory, of Basque, the latter have too often achieved undeserved prominence. By contrast, serious academic works, such as the book we are now presenting, allow us to make firm progress in our knowledge of the past of the Basque language, the right direction to be moving in if we aspire to the broader project of a whole historical grammar of Basque. While we are still on the way, I am quite sure that this book (*Basque and Proto-Basque. Language-Internal and Typological Approaches to Linguistic Reconstruction*) will bring us close to that aim.

# Table of Contents

<i>Notes on the Contributors</i> .....	xv
<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	xvii
<i>Authors, texts and other written sources</i> .....	xvii
<i>Basque Dialects (according to Bonaparte's 4<sup>th</sup> classification)</i> .....	xxii
<i>Linguistic terms</i> .....	xxiii
<i>Frequently cited works</i> .....	xxv
<i>Frequently employed journals</i> .....	xxv
<b>Introduction</b> (M. Martínez-Areta) .....	1
<b>1. The Basque Language today. Achievements and challenges</b> (A. Barreña, A. Ortega, E. Amorrortu) .....	11
1.1. Introduction .....	11
1.2. Sociolinguistic data of the Basque Country ( <i>Euskal Herria</i> ) .....	11
1.3. Factors affecting the increase in the knowledge of Basque .....	16
1.4. Positive attitudes toward Basque .....	19
1.5. The situation today: fresh challenges in the light of achievements .....	23
1.5.1. Language use and language transmission .....	23
1.5.2. Fostering affective links with Basque .....	28
1.5.3. Welcoming immigrants to Basque .....	28
1.5.4. The presence and development of Basque in the new technologies .....	29
1.6. Conclusion .....	29
<b>2. Basque Dialects</b> (M. Martínez-Areta) .....	31
2.1. Introduction .....	31
2.2. The Basque dialects today and in the historical past .....	31
2.2.1. How different are Basque dialects? .....	31
2.2.2. What are the Basque dialects? .....	34
2.2.2.1. Biscayan .....	35
2.2.2.2. Guipuscoan .....	43
2.2.2.3. Alavese .....	45
2.2.2.4. Northern High Navarrese .....	46
2.2.2.5. Southern High Navarrese .....	49
2.2.2.6. Labourdin .....	52
2.2.2.7. Western Low Navarrese .....	55
2.2.2.8. Eastern Low Navarrese .....	57
2.2.2.9. Souletin .....	59
2.2.2.10. Some other features: A-B-B-B-A and A-A-A/B-B-B alignments .....	63
2.2.3. How many Basque dialects are there? .....	66
2.3. The origin of Basque dialects .....	70
2.3.1. The secular view: tribes of Antiquity, Church dioceses, historical dialects .....	70
2.3.2. Lacombe (1952 [1924]), Uhlenbeck (1947 [1942]). Biscayan vs. the other dialects .....	73
2.3.3. Michelena's (1987 [1981a]) <i>éuscaro</i> or Common Basque .....	73
2.3.4. Zuazo's (2010a) innovating foci .....	75
2.3.5. Camino (2011), Lakarra (2011f) .....	78
2.4. Common Basque on the map .....	81
2.5. Conclusion .....	86
<b>3. External History. Sources for historical research</b> (K. Ulibarri) .....	89
3.1. Introduction .....	89

3.2. The Roman period. Aquitanian or archaic Basque and linguistic contact.....	92
3.2.1. Epigraphic evidence.....	93
3.2.2. Latin loan words.....	95
3.3. Medieval Basque. Centuries of lights and shadows.....	96
3.4. The Modern Era. Texts in Basque.....	98
3.4.1. 15 <sup>th</sup> century – 1600. Archaic Basque.....	99
3.4.2. 1600 – 1745. Old Classical Basque.....	102
3.4.3. 1745 – 1887. Early Modern Basque.....	105
3.4.4. 1887 – 1968. Late Modern Basque.....	110
3.4.5. 1968 – Today. The unified Basque language ( <i>euskara batua</i> ).....	112
3.5. Basque dialectology.....	113
3.6. Toponymy.....	114
3.7. Conclusion.....	116
<b>4. Phonetics and Phonology (A. Egurtzegi).....</b>	<b>119</b>
4.1. Introduction.....	119
4.2. The Basque phonemic inventory: now, then, and before then.....	120
4.2.1. Modern Basque dialects.....	120
4.2.2. Michelenian stages.....	122
4.2.3. Lakarran Old Proto-Basque.....	124
4.3. Vowels.....	125
4.3.1. Main vowels.....	125
4.3.2. Nasalized Vowels.....	126
4.3.3. Distribution of the Souletin /y/.....	127
4.3.4. Vocalic processes.....	130
4.3.4.1. Alternations between /i/ and /u/, /e/ and /o/.....	130
4.3.4.2. Different vowel risings.....	131
4.3.4.3. Vowel lowerings.....	133
4.3.4.4. Vowel addition.....	133
4.3.4.5. Vowel deletion.....	135
4.3.4.6. Vocalic reciprocal metathesis.....	137
4.3.5. Diphthongs.....	137
4.3.5.1. Falling diphthongs.....	138
4.3.5.2. Rising diphthongs.....	139
4.4. Consonantism.....	140
4.4.1. Sonorants.....	140
4.4.1.1. Rhotics.....	140
4.4.1.2. Laterals.....	142
4.4.1.3. Nasals.....	144
4.4.1.3.1. /n/.....	144
4.4.1.3.2. The development of /m/.....	145
4.4.2. Stops.....	146
4.4.2.1. Voiced stop series.....	147
4.4.2.2. Voiceless stop series.....	148
4.4.2.3. Aspirated voiceless stop series.....	150
4.4.3. Fricatives.....	151
4.4.3.1. Different kinds of aspiration.....	151
4.4.3.1.1. Voiceless glottal fricative /h/.....	151
4.4.3.1.2. Nasalized /h̃/.....	152
4.4.3.2. The emergence of the labio-dental fricative /f/.....	153

4.4.3.3. Sibilants.....	154
4.4.3.3.1. Voiceless fricative and affricate sibilants.....	154
4.4.3.3.2. Voiced alveolar sibilants.....	155
4.4.4. Palatal series.....	156
4.4.4.1. Palatal segments and their usage.....	156
4.4.4.2. Assimilations.....	156
4.4.4.3. Outcomes of *j-.....	157
4.4.4.4. Depalatalization.....	158
4.4.5. Some consonantal processes.....	158
4.4.5.1. Assimilation.....	158
4.4.5.2. Dissimilation.....	160
4.4.5.3. Metatheses: reciprocal metathesis, perceptual metathesis and repercussion.....	160
4.5. Phonotactics.....	162
4.5.1. Word and syllable initial positions.....	162
4.5.2. Final position and coda tautosyllabic clusters.....	163
4.5.3. Heterosyllabic clusters and medial position.....	163
4.6. Accentuation.....	166
4.6.1. Central-western accentual type.....	167
4.6.2. Northern Biscayan accentual type.....	167
4.6.3. Souletin accentual type.....	168
4.6.4. Old Accentuation.....	169
4.7. Conclusion.....	171
<b>5. Root Structure and the Reconstruction of Proto-Basque (J. A. Lakarra).....</b>	<b>173</b>
5.1. Introduction.....	173
5.2. The standard reconstruction of Proto-Basque.....	174
5.3. Reasons for change.....	177
5.4. A new theory for the reconstruction of Proto-Basque. The monosyllabic root.....	181
5.5. Theory of the root and formal etymology in the Proto-Basque lexicon.....	184
5.6. From the canonical form to diachronic holistic typology.....	189
5.7. The canonical form and the reconstruction of the Basque verb.....	192
5.8. Canonical form, word families, and the reconstruction of the Old PB phonology.....	196
5.9. Changes in the canonical form.....	202
5.10. Some conclusions and remaining tasks.....	204
5.11. Appendices.....	208
5.11.1. Tables.....	208
5.11.2. Etymological appendix.....	211
<b>6. Noun Morphology (E. Santazilia).....</b>	<b>223</b>
6.1. Introduction.....	223
6.2. Description of today's Basque noun declension system.....	223
6.3. The article, definiteness and number in noun declension.....	227
6.3.1. The grammatical cases.....	228
6.3.2. The local cases.....	235
6.4. The origin of the primary cases.....	239
6.4.1. The grammatical cases.....	240
6.4.1.1. The ergative.....	240
6.4.1.2. The genitive.....	242
6.4.1.3. The dative.....	245
6.4.1.4. The instrumental.....	246

6.4.2. The local cases .....	247
6.4.2.1. The inessive .....	248
6.4.2.2. The allative .....	257
6.4.2.3. The ablativ (and prosecutive) .....	261
6.5. Secondary cases .....	266
6.5.1. Cases built upon the allative .....	267
6.5.1.1. The directional allative .....	267
6.5.1.2. The terminative allative .....	268
6.5.2. Cases built upon the genitive .....	269
6.5.2.1. The sociative .....	269
6.5.2.2. The motivative .....	272
6.5.2.3. The destinative .....	272
6.6. The pseudo-flectional morphemes (or non-cases) .....	273
6.6.1. The local genitive .....	273
6.6.2. The essive/translative .....	276
6.6.3. The partitive .....	277
6.7. Conclusion .....	280
<b>7. Demonstratives and Personal Pronouns (M. Martínez-Areta)</b> .....	283
7.1. Introduction .....	283
7.2. Demonstratives .....	283
7.2.1. The paradigms of the standard language .....	283
7.2.2. Differences across dialects and historical developments .....	285
7.2.3. Peculiarities of case forms as compared to the noun declension .....	288
7.2.4. The demonstrative → article phenomena .....	294
7.2.5. The internal structure of deictic roots and the origin of the tripartite deixis .....	296
7.2.6. The category of number on demonstratives .....	299
7.3. Personal pronouns .....	301
7.3.1. 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> person pronouns .....	301
7.3.2. Peculiarities of the case forms of 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> p. weak pronouns .....	302
7.3.3. Weak vs. strong forms .....	306
7.3.4. The Linschmann-Aresti Law .....	312
7.3.5. 3 <sup>rd</sup> person pronouns. Pronominal, anaphoric, and other uses .....	316
7.4. Conclusion .....	321
<b>8. Non-Finite Verbal Morphology (M. Padilla-Moyano)</b> .....	323
8.1. Introduction .....	323
8.2. Verbal periphrases in Basque .....	324
8.3. Tense and Aspect suffixes of non-finite verb forms: origins and variation .....	326
8.3.1. About the verbal radical (-Ø) and participle .....	326
8.3.1.1. A relative chronology of non-finite verbal forms .....	326
8.3.1.2. Classification of Basque verbs .....	327
8.3.1.2.1. The <i>-i</i> class .....	328
8.3.1.2.2. The <i>-n</i> class .....	328
8.3.1.2.3. The <i>-tu</i> class .....	329
8.3.1.2.4. The rest of the verbs .....	329
8.3.1.3. Expansion of the participle in western Basque .....	333
8.3.1.4. Reinforcement of the radical in eastern Basque .....	334
8.3.2. The third non-finite verbal form: the gerund .....	336
8.3.2.1. On the Basque gerund .....	336
8.3.2.2. The gerund, suffix by suffix .....	339

8.3.2.2.1. <i>-te</i> .....	339
8.3.2.2.2. <i>-tze</i> .....	339
8.3.2.2.3. <i>-eta</i> .....	340
8.3.2.2.4. <i>-keta</i> .....	340
8.3.2.2.5. The complex suffix <i>-(t)zaitte</i> .....	341
8.3.3. The prospective participle.....	342
8.4. The Basque periphrastic verb: History and Pre-History.....	345
8.4.1. Combining non-finite forms with auxiliaries: TAM categories.....	345
8.4.2. Addition of further elements in periphrastic conjugation.....	348
8.4.2.1. Remoteness in present perfect and past.....	348
8.4.2.2. Marking the verbs as a sentence focus.....	348
8.4.2.3. Expressing progressive aspect: <i>ari, ibili, egon, jardun</i> .....	349
8.4.2.4. Further auxiliaries.....	350
8.4.3. Historical changes in the TAM system.....	351
8.4.4. Origins of the Basque periphrastic verb.....	352
8.4.5. The influence of Romance models.....	354
8.5. Conclusion.....	356
<b>9. Finite Verbal Morphology (B. Ariztimuño)</b> .....	359
9.1. Introduction.....	359
9.2. Background and brief description.....	359
9.2.1. Previous works.....	359
9.2.2. General traits.....	360
9.3. Person and number agreement.....	363
9.3.1. Person.....	365
9.3.2. Number.....	368
9.4. Tense-Aspect-Mood.....	373
9.4.1. Tense and Aspect.....	374
9.4.1.1. Specific morphemes.....	374
9.4.1.1.1. Present.....	374
9.4.1.1.2. Past.....	375
9.4.1.1.3. Hypothetical.....	376
9.4.1.2. Morpheme order and ergative displacement.....	377
9.4.1.3. Inherent Aspect: past, present and future.....	377
9.4.2. Mood.....	378
9.5. Valency and diathesis.....	381
9.5.1. <i>Nor</i> .....	383
9.5.2. <i>Nor-Nori</i> .....	385
9.5.3. <i>Nor-Nork</i> .....	387
9.5.4. <i>Nor-Nori-Nork</i> .....	389
9.5.4.1. Dative insertion.....	392
9.5.4.1.1. Dative flag(s).....	392
9.5.4.1.2. Alternation of the present tense vowel.....	393
9.5.4.2. Causativization as dative insertion.....	394
9.5.5. More on the origin of the diathesis in the Basque verb: was Basque a passive language?.....	394
9.6. Allocutive agreement.....	397
9.6.1. The use of allocutive forms.....	399
9.6.1.1. Morphosyntactic triggering and constraints.....	399
9.6.1.2. Dialectal extension.....	400

9.6.2. The <i>hiketa</i> .....	401
9.6.2.1. Morphological changes .....	402
9.6.2.1.1. Addition of the addressee agreement .....	402
9.6.2.1.2. Stem suppletion .....	403
9.6.2.2. Phonological changes .....	405
9.6.2.2.1. Initial <i>d-</i> and the <i>-i-</i> insertion .....	405
9.6.2.2.2. Tense vowel and the <i>-i-</i> insertion .....	407
9.6.3. The <i>zuketa</i> and <i>xuketa</i> .....	408
9.7. Auxiliary verbs and synthetic verbs .....	410
9.7.1. Differences .....	410
9.7.1.1. Paradigmatic differences .....	410
9.7.1.2. Differences in meaning .....	412
9.7.1.3. Differences in morphology .....	414
9.7.2. Auxiliaries from synthetics, synthetics from Serial Verb Constructions (SVC) .....	416
9.8. Final remarks .....	417
9.8.1. Dialectal variants and reconstruction .....	417
9.8.2. Diathesis and agreement .....	422
9.8.3. SVCs and a possible origin of the Basque synthetic verbs .....	424
<b>10. Word order (U. Reguero-Ugarte) .....</b>	<b>429</b>
10.1. Introduction .....	429
10.2. OV vs. VO. Sentence constituent order in Basque .....	430
10.2.1. Syntactically conditioned constituent order .....	430
10.2.1.1. Affirmative sentences .....	430
10.2.1.2. Negative sentences .....	434
10.2.1.3. Sentences with a heavy O .....	436
10.2.1.4. Subordinate clauses .....	439
10.2.2. Pragmatically conditioned constituent order .....	440
10.2.3. Theoretical views on the sentence constituent order in Basque .....	443
10.3. Word order within the Noun Phrase .....	445
10.3.1. NPo vs. PrN .....	446
10.3.2. DetN vs. NDet (Det = Article, Demonstrative, Numeral, Interrogative) .....	447
10.3.3. GN vs. NG .....	449
10.3.4. RelN vs. NRel .....	451
10.3.5. AdjN vs. NAdj .....	453
10.4. Hypotheses about the word order in Proto-Basque .....	454
10.4.1. Trask (1977, <i>HB</i> ) .....	455
10.4.2. Gómez (1994) and Gómez & Sainz (1995) .....	456
10.4.3. Lakarra (2005, 2006b) .....	457
10.4.4. Martínez-Areta (2011, 2012) .....	458
10.5. Conclusion .....	460
<b>References .....</b>	<b>461</b>
<b>General Index .....</b>	<b>487</b>

## Notes on the Contributors

**Esti Amorrortu** is Associate Professor in the Department of Modern Languages and Basque Studies at the University of Deusto. Her research interests include Basque sociolinguistics, with a special focus on language attitudes towards Basque. Email: [esti.amorrortu@deusto.es](mailto:esti.amorrortu@deusto.es)

**Borja Ariztimuño** is a PhD student in the *Linguistics* program of the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), and Research Assistant and Instructor in the Department of Basque Studies and General Linguistics of the same university. His research focuses on the diachronic study of the Basque verbal morphology, etymology, and general typology. Email: [borja.ariztimuno@ehu.es](mailto:borja.ariztimuno@ehu.es)

**Andoni Barreña** is Associate Professor in the Department of Spanish Language at the University of Salamanca. His research interests include bilingual language acquisition and minority languages. Email: [andoni@usal.es](mailto:andoni@usal.es)

**Ander Egurtzegi** is a PhD student in the *Linguistics* program of the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), and Research Assistant in the Department of Basque Studies and General Linguistics of the same university. His research focuses on the history and prehistory of Basque phonology, as well as on the description and analysis of phonetic processes. Email: [ander.egurtzegi@ehu.es](mailto:ander.egurtzegi@ehu.es)

**Joseba A. Lakarra** is Professor of Basque Philology at the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), editor of the journal *ASJU*, and member of the Royal Academy of the Basque Language (*Euskaltzaindia*). His research includes text edition, philological analysis of Basque texts, historical linguistics, etymology and general typology, but has particularly focused on the reconstruction of Proto-Basque taking the analysis of the canonical root as the starting point. Email: [joseba.lakarra@ehu.es](mailto:joseba.lakarra@ehu.es)

**Mikel Martínez-Areta** is Assistant Professor of Basque Philology at the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) and co-editor of the linguistic journal *Mikroglottika*. His research focuses on the historical morphology and syntax of Basque, and on general typology. Email: [josemiguel.martinez@ehu.es](mailto:josemiguel.martinez@ehu.es)

**Ane Ortega** is Associate Professor in the Department of Language Learning at *Begoñako Andra Mari* Teacher Training College. Her research interests include the didactics of language in bilingual educational programs and language attitudes. Email: [aortega@bam.edu.es](mailto:aortega@bam.edu.es)

**Manuel Padilla-Moyano** is a PhD student in the *Basque Linguistics and Philology* program of the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), and Research Assistant in the Department of Basque Studies and General Linguistics of the same university, as well as a member of the research laboratory IKER UMR 5478 (CNRS). His research focuses on the edition and philological analysis of Eastern Basque texts, diachronic dialectology of Eastern Basque, and historical sociolinguistics. Email: [manuel.padilla@iker.cnrs.fr](mailto:manuel.padilla@iker.cnrs.fr)

**Urtzi Reguero-Ugarte** is a PhD student in the *Basque Linguistics and Philology* program of the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), and Research Assistant in the Department of Basque Studies and General Linguistics of the same university. His research focuses on Medieval Basque and the origin of dialectalization, as well as on the Navarrese dialects of the archaic and old periods. Email: [urtzi.reguero@gmail.com](mailto:urtzi.reguero@gmail.com)

**Ekaitz Santazilia** is a PhD student in the *Linguistics* program of the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), and Senior Lecturer in the Philology and Language Learning Department of the Public University of Navarre (UPNA/NUP). His research focuses on Basque philology, Basque historical morphology and general typology. Email: [ekaitz.santazilia@unavarra.es](mailto:ekaitz.santazilia@unavarra.es)

**Koldo Ulibarri** is a PhD student in the *Basque Linguistics and Philology* program of the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), and Research Assistant in the Department of Basque Studies and General Linguistics of the same university. His research focuses on the edition and philological analysis of Basque texts, as well as on the diachronic dialectology of Western Basque. Email: [koldo.ulibarri@gmail.com](mailto:koldo.ulibarri@gmail.com)

## Abbreviations

### *Authors, texts and other written sources*

- Ag. = Juan Bautista Aguirre (1742 – 1823). Guipuscoan priest and writer born in Asteasu. He composed several religious works which display an unusual command of the language. His most relevant text is *Confesioco eta Comunioco Sacramentuen gañean Eracusaldiac* (1803).
- Amill. = J. B. Amilleta (1639 – 1700). He wrote a doctrine in the variety of Antzuola (ca. 1678), a Guipuscoan town located in the Biscayan-speaking area.
- Añ. = Pedro Antonio de Añibarro (1748 – 1830). Biscayan Franciscan born in Villaro-Areatza. He spent the last 40 years of his life in Zarautz (Guipuscoa). Añibarro wrote many works, among them *Guero* (a translation into Biscayan of Axular's *Guero*). Along with Moguel, he is considered to be the father of Biscayan literature.
- Arg. = Pierre Argaignarats (17<sup>th</sup> c.). Priest of Ziburu (Labourd) who wrote two works in Basque. Only one of them has been preserved: *Devoten Breviarioa* (1665).
- Ax. = Pedro de Aguerre y Azpilicueta “Axular” (1556 – 1644). *Axular* is the name of the house where he was born, in Urdazubi, to the north of the Baztan Valley (Navarre, but in the Labourdin-speaking area). He was the parish priest of Sara (Labourd) from 1600 until his death. He only wrote the *Guero* (‘After’), printed in 1643, an ascetic work which soon became a model of linguistic elegance. Even today, Basque is sometimes referred to as “Axular’s language”.
- Azk. = Resurrección María de Azkue (1864 – 1951). He was born in Lekeitio (Biscay) and died in Bilbao. In 1919, he was appointed president of Euskaltzaindia, the Royal Academy of the Basque Language. Azkue cultivated narrative, poetry, drama and opera in Basque. In addition, he was a prominent Bascologist. His *Diccionario Vasco-Español-Francés* and his *Morfología Vasca* are two reference works in Basque lexicography and Basque grammar, respectively.
- Barr. = Pedro Ignacio de Barrutia (1682 – 1759). Public notary born in Aramaio (north. Alava). He is the author of *Actto para la noche buena*, a short Basque drama whose language is peppered with striking archaisms.
- Ber. = Juan de Beriayn (1566 – 1633). He was the Abbot of Uterga (Navarre), where he was born and died. He published two works: *Tratado de como se ha de oyr missa* (1621) and *Doctrina christiana* (1626), which are the oldest long texts in HN.
- Bet. = Juan Perez de Betolaza († ca. 1600). Priest, native of Betolatzta (north. Alava). He is the author of *Dotriña Christiana en romance y bascuence* (1596), the earliest printed text in Alavese (if it can be considered as such) and, along with RS, the first work printed in western Basque.

- Bp. = Athanase de Belapeyre. Parish priest of Sohüta (Soule), his *Catechima laburra* (1696) is the first book actually written in Souletin dialect, since both Oihenart and Tartas introduced some linguistic features from other continental dialects. This work is partially translated from Bossuet's *Catéchisme des fêtes et autres solennités et observances de l'église*.
- Cap. = Martin Ochoa de Capanaga (ca. 1600 – 1661). Biscayan priest from Mañaria. He translated from Spanish into Biscayan Ripalda's *Exposicion breve de la Doctrina Christiana* (1656).
- Cb. = Agustín de Cardaberaz (Hernani, 1703 – Bologna 1770). Guipuscoan Jesuit and theologian, author of over fifteen works. Outstanding among them is *Eusqueraren Berri Onac* ('The good news of Basque'), printed in 1761, a method addressed to those who wish to "correctly write, read and speak in Basque".
- CSM = *Cartulary of San Millán*, also known as the *Becerro Galicano*. A late-twelfth-century cartulary penned in the Monastery of San Millán (in the High Rioja), containing hundreds of Basque place and personal names, often preserved in archaizing forms, the linguistically most interesting of which date from the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. A singularly important document contained in the cartulary is the *Reja de San Millán*, dating from 1025, in which over three hundred Alavese villages which paid annual dues in iron or cattle to the monastery are listed. The significance of the list for linguistic research is huge, as the place names display an abundance of archaic features such as aspiration.
- Dch. = Bernart Dechepare (16<sup>th</sup> c.). Priest, native of somewhere near Donibane Garazi (Cize, Low Navarre). His *Linguae Vasconum Primitiae* (Bordeaux, 1545), a collection of poems of humanistic influence, is the first book printed in Basque. Dechepare's life must be viewed in the context of the political and religious intrigues which took place in the Kingdom of Navarre in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.
- Duv. = Joan Piarres Duvoisin (Ainhoa, 1810 – Ziburu, 1891). Head of Customs by profession, he was a learned man, entrusted by Prince Louis-Loucien Bonaparte with the first translation of the whole Bible, and some other works. Among several achievements, he also wrote some literary works, began a Basque-French Dictionary, and translated Cb.'s *Aita San Ignacioren Egercicioen gañean afectoac* from Guipuscoan into Labourdian, under the title *Liburu Ederra* ('The Beautiful Book'), published in 1856.
- D.Zeg. = *Doctrina Christiana* (1741), written in the variety of Zegama (Guipuscoa), possibly by Martin de Urteaga.
- Eliç. = Francisco de Eliçalde (1646 – 1733), born in Gesalatz (Navarre). He is the author of *Apecendaco doctrina christiana uscaras* (1735).
- E.Cib. = Joannes Etcheverry (17<sup>th</sup> c.), best known as Etcheverry de Ciboure. Classical Labourdian writer who published three books: *Manual devotioenezcoa* (Bordeaux, 1627), *Noelac eta berce canta espiritual berriac* (ca. 1630) and *Eliçara erabiltecco liburua* (Bordeaux, 1636).

- E.Sar. = Joannes Etcheverry (Sara, 1668 – Azpeitia, 1749), best known as Etcheverry de Sara. This classical Labourdin writer composed three works: *Lau-urdirri gomendiozco carta, edo guthuna* (1718), *Escuararen hatsapenac* (an apologetic work) and *Euscal-herriari eta Euscaldun guztiei escuarazco hatsapenac latin icasteco*, a method for learning Latin.
- F.Bart. = Bartolomé de Madariaga (1768 – 1835). Biscayan Carmelite born in Markina, author of a three-volume sermonary and a treatise against dances.
- Gam. = Juan Bautista Gamiz (Sabando, 1696 – Bologna, 1773). Born in Sabando (southeast. Alava), he became a Jesuit in Valladolid, and from 1728 to 1767 he lived in Pamplona-Iruñea, until King Charles III banned the Jesuits from Spain (that is why he died in Bologna, like Mendiburu). He wrote mainly in Spanish, but 238 lines written by him in Basque (two long poems and four short ones) have been conserved until our days.
- Gar. = Esteban de Garibay y Zamalloa (Arrasate-Mondragón, 1533 – Madrid, 1599). Guipuscoan learned man, he came to be the royal historian and chronicler of Philip the 2<sup>nd</sup>. He did not write in Basque himself, but in his two works *Compendio Historial...* (1571) and *Ilustraciones genealógicas...* (1596), written in Spanish, he often reports valuable news about the Basque language. Especially important are the epic poems gathered by him from oral (hence archaizing) tradition, which typically refer back to the political conflicts and fights of the previous century in Biscay, Guipuscoa and Alava. He also compiled two series of proverbs.
- Gç. = Bernard Gasteluçar (Ziburu, 1614 – Pau, 1701). Labourdin Jesuit and author of an ascetic book, *Eguia Catholicac, salvamendu eternalaren eguiteco necessario direnac* (Pau, 1686). He is considered to be one of the finest Basque poets of his period.
- Haran. = Joannes Haraneder (ca. 1669 – ?), born in Donibane Lohizune (Labourd). He is the author of a manuscript in which the Gospels are translated into Labourdin, and of two further translations of well-known ascetic works, published in 1749 and 1750.
- K&B. = *Kadet eta Bettiriño*. A manuscript written in West.-LN (from Hazparne, Labourd) to be dated ca. 1750, which narrates in dialogue Jesus' life and death. Its author could be Gratien Diharce d'Alçuyet.
- Lar. = Manuel de Larramendi (Andoain, 1690 – Loiola, 1766). Guipuscoan Jesuit and writer who conceived a cultural project to make Basque a language of social and cultural prestige. His apologetic work (1728), his grammar (1729) and, above all, his *Diccionario Trilingüe del Castellano, Bascuence y Latin* (Donostia-San Sebastian, 1745) prompted the beginning of Guipuscoan literature, as well as the emergence of Modern Basque, symbolically situated in 1745.
- Laz. = Juan Perez de Lazarraga (ca. 1548 – 1605). Man of letters from Larrea (northeast. Alava), he penned i.a. a bucolic novel and several poems in Basque, the manuscript of which was found—partially damaged and with several gaps—in 2004. His language is our most important source of knowledge about the Alavese dialect in ca. 1600.

- Lcc. = Niccolò Landucci (16<sup>th</sup> c.). Italian humanist born in Lucca. His *Dictionarium linguae cantabrigae* (1562, unpublished until 1958), the first dictionary of Basque (Spanish-Basque), is believed to reflect the language spoken in Vitoria-Gasteiz in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.
- Lç. = Joannes Leizarraga (1506 – 1601). Born in Beskoitze (Labourd, but linguistically East.-LN. territory), among other works he translated, upon the request of the Calvinist Queen of (the Low) Navarre, *Testamentu Berria* ‘The New Testament’ (1571) into a Basque which was aimed to be understood by all continental Basque speakers. Religious reasons prevented Leizarraga’s titanic attempt to build a (continental) Standard Basque from succeeding.
- L.Elç. = Joaquín Liçarraga de Elcano (1748 – 1835). Navarrese priest born in Elkano, author of several religious books, the most relevant being *Urteco igande guztietaraco platicac* (1846), a compilation of sermons in South.-HN. Basque.
- Mend. = Sebastián de Mendiburu (Oiartzun, 1708 – Bologna 1782). His birth town is located in northeastern Guipuscoa, but linguistically belongs to North.-HN. territory. He was a Jesuit who left a number of works, both published and handwritten. He came to be known as “the Basque Cicero”.
- Mic. = Rafael de Micoleta (1611 – ?). Biscayan priest born in Bilbao, author of *Modo breue de aprender la lengua vizcayna* (1653), a succinct learning method of Biscayan Basque, also containing several dialogues and poems.
- Mog. = Juan Antonio Moguel (Eibar, 1745 – Markina, 1804). Priest and writer, author of *Perru Abarca* (1782, published in 1880), which has long been considered the first Basque novel, although current literary theory prefers to interpret it as a pedagogical dialogue. His language became a model for eastern Biscayan writers.
- Mst. = Martin Maister (18<sup>th</sup> c.). Parish priest of Ligi (High Soule). His work *Jesu-Christen Imitacionia* (Pau, 1757), a translation of Kempis’ *Imitatio Christi* into Souletin, is considered the zenith of Classical Souletin.
- Och.A. = Joseph Ochoa de Arin (17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries). His work *Doctrina Christianaren explicacioa* (1713), written in the variety of Ordizia, is one of the few records of Old Guipuscoan.
- Oih. = Arnaud d’Oihenart (Maule, 1592 – Donapaleu, 1667). Souletin lawyer, historian and poet. He published i.a. two works in Basque in a single volume: *Les Proverbes basques, recueillis par le Sr. d’Oihenart, plus les poésies Basques du mesme Auteur* (Paris, 1657), i.e. a compilation of proverbs (reflecting an archaizing, eastern Basque) and several poems. In these, the language is not exclusively Souletin, but uses forms from other continental dialects.
- OI. = Bartolomé Olaechea (18<sup>th</sup> c.). Native of Gautegiz-Arteaga and chaplain in Laukariz —both in Biscay—, he is the author of *Doctrina cristianea* (Vitoria-Gasteiz, 1763).

- Peñ. = Peñafiorida (Azkoitia, 1729 – Bergara, 1785). Francisco Javier de Munibe e Idiaquez, Count of Peñafiorida. Distinguished Guipuscoan man of letters, he created and fostered the *Real Sociedad Bascongada de los Amigos del Pais*, a cultural society inspired by the French Enlightenment. Among other works, he wrote the comic opera *El borracho burlado* (1764), with texts in Spanish and Guipuscoan Basque, and the Christmas song *Gavon-Sariac* (1762), entirely in Guipuscoan Basque.
- Port. = Martin Portal. Winner of a literary contest in Pamplona-Iruñea, in 1610. The poem —80 lines long— with which he achieved this award reflects a language which is to be located somewhere near to the Middle Sakana or the Burunda (western Navarre), or perhaps even further south, beyond the Urbasa Mountain Range (Amescoas, Lana), where Basque faded away early.
- Pouv. = Sylvain Pouvreau (Bourges, ? – Paris, ca. 1675). Of non-Basque origin, this French writer was a priest in Bidarte (Labourd) from 1640 to 1644. He composed i.a. a Basque-French dictionary, and translated several religious works into Basque.
- RS. = *Refranes y Sentencias*. A collection of proverbs printed in Pamplona-Iruñea in 1596. Most of them reflect an archaizing language which is to be located in or near to Bilbao.
- Tt. = Jean de Tartas (17<sup>th</sup> c.). Souletin writer, author of two printed ascetic books: *Onsa hilceco bidia* (1666) and *Arima penitentaren occupatione devotaq* (1672). He introduced into these some linguistic features of Low Navarrese and Labourdin, in order to get closer to non-Souletin continental speakers.
- Ub. = Juan Antonio de Ubillos (1707 – 1789). A Franciscan born in Villabona (Guipuscoa), author i.a. of *Christau Dotriñ Berri-ekarlea* (1785), a version in Basque of Fleury's *Catéchisme historique*.
- Urt. = Pierre d'Urthe (Donibane Lohizune, 1664 – London, ca. 1725). Calvinist Labourdin writer. For religious reasons, he had to go into exile in England, where he wrote three works published after his death: *Biblia Saindua. Testament Çaharra eta Berria, Grammaire Cantabrique basque* (ca. 1712) and *Dictionarium Latino-Cantabricum* (ca. 1715).
- VJ. = *Viva Jesus*. An anonymous Christian doctrine written and printed at some point of the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (perhaps ca. 1640) somewhere in southwest. Biscay.
- Volt. = Voltaire (17<sup>th</sup> c.). Man of letters who wrote *L'interpréct ou traduction du François, Espagnol & Basque* (Lyon, ca. 1620), a learning method with dialogues, grammatical paradigms, proverbs and a small dictionary. The dialect reflected in it is Labourdin.
- Zav. = Fray Juan Mateo de Zavala (Bilbao, 1777 – Zarautz, 1840). Biscayan Franciscan and writer, author of several fables and of *El verbo regular vascongado del dialecto vizcaíno*, an essay on the Biscayan verb.

*Basque Dialects (according to Bonaparte's 4<sup>th</sup> classification)*

- Aesc = Aescoan. Subdialect of West.-LN spoken in the Aescoa Valley, in northern Navarre, to the west of Salazar. In spite of Bonaparte's classification, Aescoan exhibits some features which can be considered as peninsular.
- Al = Alavese. Peninsular dialect formerly spoken in Alava, included within B by Bonaparte. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it was spoken in the northern strip of this territory, even up to Vitoria-Gasteiz and perhaps partially further south. Nowadays, it is restricted to the towns of Legutio and Aramaio. Traditionally, Alavese varieties have been regarded as a branch of Biscayan, but recent research tends to consider it an independent (historical) dialect with a relevant irradiation focus in Vitoria-Gasteiz.
- B = Biscayan. The dialect spoken in Biscay (except in the western third of the province, where Basque is not spoken), and in the western strip of the province of Guipuscoa, mostly corresponding to the Deba Valley. It is highly idiosyncratic, and has several features which are not shared by any other Basque dialect.
- East.-LN = Eastern Low Navarrese. The dialect spoken in the east of the Low Navarre, although its area also spreads to the northwestern part of this territory, and even enters northeastern Labourd. In the south, it also penetrates into the Salazar Valley in the High Navarre. It is Dechepare's dialect, and some of its linguistic features define it as an eastern dialect. In the northeastern corner of Low Navarre, the varieties of the Country of Mixe (Basque *Amikūze*) have a marked identity.
- G = Guipuscoan. The dialect spoken in most of Guipuscoa (except at the northeastern end, where local varieties are linked to Navarrese, and in the Biscayan-speaking Deba Valley), as well as in some neighboring valleys of High Navarre. Due to its central location—it is surrounded on all sides by Basque-speaking areas—, Guipuscoan is an innovating, vigorous dialect.
- L = Labourdin. The central dialect spoken in western Labourd (and in the Baztan Valley in the High Navarre, according to most classifications). In fact, Western and Eastern Low Navarrese are also spoken in the east of Labourd. In spite of its current limited geographical and demographic extent, Labourdin has historically been considered to be a very elegant dialect, and has consequently been fostered in much of the literary tradition.
- North.-HN = Northern High Navarrese. The dialect spoken in the north and west of High Navarre (except in the Burunda, neighboring Guipuscoa), and at the northeastern extreme of Guipuscoa. North.-HN can be regarded as a central dialect.
- R = Roncalese. A subdialect of Souletin (in Bonaparte's classification) or an independent dialect (in Azkue's classification) which was spoken in the Valley of Roncal (northeastern corner of Navarre) and which comprehended the varieties of Uztarroze, Urzainki and Bidankoze. It was already languishing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and its last speaker (from Uztarroze) died in 1992. It contained plenty of idiosyncratic features, of high interest for linguistic research.

- S = Souletin. The dialect spoken in Soule (and in the Roncal Valley according to Bonaparte's classification). Its tendency towards archaism, together with its high degree of inner unity, makes Souletin a well-defined dialect with a strongly marked identity. Due to its rich tradition, Souletin is the most relevant dialect of eastern Basque, in contrast with its small number of current speakers (ca. five thousand).
- Sal = Salazarese. Subdialect of East.-LN spoken in the Salazar Valley, in the High Navarre (to the west of the Roncal Valley). In spite of Bonaparte's classification, some of its linguistic features can be considered as peninsular. Today, it is quasi-extinct.
- South.-HN = Southern High Navarrese. The dialect historically spoken in the central part of the High Navarre (hence the southern area of the Basque-speaking area), surrounding Pamplona-Iruñea on all sides. As a dialect, it was alive and somewhat vigorous at the time of Bonaparte's visits and research, but since then, Spanish has replaced it.
- West.-LN = Western Low Navarrese. The dialect spoken in the west of the Low Navarre, except in the north (where East.-LN is spoken). It also comprehends a region of south-eastern Labourd, the town of Luzaide-Valcarlos (in High Navarrese territory) and the Aescoa Valley of the High Navarre.

- CB = Common Basque. The language from which all dialects would have branched, and from which the linguistic diversity of the different dialects would have originated. Michelena (1987 [1981a]) dated its existence to the 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. It is important to bear in mind, however, that there are a number of important innovations which have occurred after that period but which have reached all dialects.
- PB = Proto-Basque. The language which can be to some degree reconstructed by means of linguistic arguments (mainly internal reconstruction). It is prior to CB. Although there is absolutely no trace for its dating, it is sometimes estimated to have existed in the last centuries of the pre-Christian Era.
- SB = (Modern) Standard Basque. The variety created and refined since the Congress of Arantzazu (1968) to enable understanding between the Basque speakers of different regions.

### *Linguistic terms*

A	Agent	ALP	Allocutive Polite
Abl	Ablative	Aor	Aorist
Abs	Absolutive	Aquit	Aquitanian
Adj	Adjective	Arc	Archaic
Adv	Adverb, Adverbial	Art	Article
Affirm	Affirmative	AUX	Auxiliary (Verb)
AL	Allocutive	AV	Auxiliary Verb
ALF	Allocutive Familiar	A.CP	Agentive Complement
All	Allative	Bearn	Bearnese
Alloc	Allocutive	Cast	Castilian

Caus	Causative	NPST	Non-Past
Cent	Central	O	Object
Comm	Common	Occ	Occitan
Comp	Complement	P	Patient (Agreement)
COND	Conditional	p	Person
COP	Copula	PFV	Perfective
CPL	Complementizer	Pl	Plural
CS	Causal	Po	Postposition
c.	Century	POT	Potential
Dat	Dative	PPSP	Personal Pronoun Suffixing Process
Def	Definite	Pr	Preposition
Det	Determiner	Pre	Prefix
DF	Dative Flag	PROG	Progressive
Dial	Dialectal	Pron	Pronoun
Dim	Diminutive	Pros	Prosecutive
Dst	Destinative	PROSP	Prospective
East	Eastern	Prox	Proximate
EP	Epenthesis	PRS	Present
Erg	Ergative	PST	Past
F	Feminine	PTC	Particle
Fr	French	PTCP	Participle
FUT	Future	Ptv	Partitive
G	Genitive	p.n.	Proper Noun
Gasc	Gascon	R	Recipient
Gen	(Possessive) Genitive	RAD	Radical
GER	Gerund	Rel	Relative (or Relative Clause)
HAB	Habitual	Resp	Respect
HYP	Hypothetical	RLV	Relativizer
IMP	Imperative	Rom	Romance
Indef	Indefinite	S	Subject (or Subject Intransitive)
Ines	Inessive	SB	Subordinator
Instr	Instrumental	SBJV	Subjunctive
INTR	Intransitive	Sg	Singular
IPFV	Imperfective	Soc	Sociative
IRR	Irrealis	South	Southern
Lat	Latin	Sp	Spanish
Lev	Locative	Suff	Suffix
L.Gen	Local Genitive	SVC	Serial Verb Construction
M	Masculine	T	Topic
Mot	Motivative	TAM	Tense-Aspect-Mood
MV	Main Verb	Term	Terminative
N	Noun	TMP	Temporal
NF	Non-Finite	TR	Transitive
NOMNLT	Nominalizer	V	Verb
North	Northern	V <sub>F</sub>	Finite Verb
NP	Noun Phrase	V <sub>NF</sub>	Non-Finite Verb
NPRS	Non-Present	West	Western

*Frequently cited works*

ContTAV	<i>Contribución al Estudio y Edición de Textos Arcaicos Vascos</i> (= Sarasola 1990 [1981])
EDH	<i>Euskal Dialektologiaren Hastapenak</i> (= Txillardeggi & Aurrekoetxea (coord.) 1983)
EMH	<i>Euskal Morfologiaren Historia</i> (= Azkarate & Altuna 2001)
FHV	<i>Fonética Histórica Vasca</i> (= Michelena 1977 [1961])
GB	<i>A Grammar of Basque</i> (= Hualde & Ortiz de Urbina (eds.) 2003)
HB	<i>The History of Basque</i> (= Trask 1997)
MV	<i>Morfología Vasca</i> (= Azkue 1969 [1923-25])
OEH	<i>Orotariko Euskal Hiztegia / General Dictionary of Basque</i> (= Euskaltzaindia 1987-2005)
TAV	<i>Textos Arcaicos Vascos</i> (= Michelena 1990 [1964a])

*Frequently employed journals*

ASJU	<i>Anuario del Seminario (de Filología Vasca) Julio de Urquijo</i>
BAP	<i>Boletín de la Real Sociedad Vascongada de los Amigos del País</i>
FLV	<i>Fontes Linguae Vasconum</i>
RIEV	<i>Revista Internacional de Estudios Vascos</i>



## Introduction

*Mikel Martínez-Areta*

*(University of the Basque Country, UPV/EHU)*

Much of the literature on the history of the Basque language —the only surviving language of non-Indo-European origin in western Europe— has dealt with its origin and possible relatives. A list of the many attempts to relate it to another language or language family would be exasperatingly long, and most probably not exhaustive. Leaving aside the obvious relationship of historical Basque to Aquitanian, Trask (1995a) refuted all of them, or more precisely, denied that any of the alleged relationships had been proven so far, and in Trask (*HB*: 358-429) he made a magnificent *reductio ad absurdum* of the methods which had been used in such attempts, arguing that such a methodology can lead us to prove whatever linguistic connection we wish (as he demonstrated with Basque and Hungarian). Since then, such attempts have not ceased, some of them unprecedented. The Basque language, however, continues to be a language isolate, and there is no indication that it will cease to remain as such in the near future.

Unfortunately, this ceaseless effort of historical research to establish unprovable theories has often diverted attention from paths which might have proven successful for making progress in the elucidation of its prehistorical aspects. As a result, Basque diachronic linguistics suffers from a historical delay in comparison with the equivalent discipline in many other languages or language families. In particular, progress made in diachronic cross-linguistic typology since the seventies has not been systematically applied to Basque until very recently, and then only in literature mostly written in Basque, Spanish or French. The purpose of this book is precisely to fill this gap, to provide an account of this situation, and to turn the spotlight on this possibility for research.

The starting point for this purpose, then, will be that Basque has as yet no proven relative, and hence no possibility for linguistic comparison beyond its geographical boundaries (for the Basque-Iberian question, see below). Our sources of knowledge are limited, and any honest attempt to explore the past of the language ought to start from this assumption. Written texts do not appear until roughly 1500, and then only in particular dialects and geographical areas. The attestations from the five centuries prior to this, mainly consisting of onomastic material in documents written and transmitted in medieval monasteries, do not provide any crucial data which can be of help for historical grammar. The same holds true for the Aquitanian inscriptions engraved on stone in the Roman

period (ca. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD), and for the place names provided by Greek and Latin authors from Antiquity.

With such a scarcity of sources, Bascologists have had to maximize the utility of the information provided by the linguistic contact with Latin and Romance. It cannot be a coincidence that the first scholar who tried to carry out systematic historical linguistic work on Basque in the modern sense of the word, Hugo Schuchardt (1842 – 1927), was a Romanist. Since Schuchardt's work,<sup>1</sup> Basque linguistic studies have made much progress, but, as I have said, it is hard to escape the impression that serious diachronic work has been delayed by misconceptions, uchronic conceptions and clichés, most of them derived from its status as a language isolate and from the fact that much research has focused on the search for relatives. Thus, it was not until the 1950s that the structuralist method was first employed to establish some basic game rules in historical reconstruction. This enabled Basque diachronic linguistics to catch up with the functionalist-structuralist methodology which flourished in the post-war period, but, indeed, in the diachronic research of other language families such as Romance, Germanic, Slavic or Indo-European linguistics, the Neo-Grammarians and their phonetic law had already provided a useful tool for reconstructing analysis as early as the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup>

These functionalist-structuralist approaches entered the Basque discipline thanks to André Martinet (1908 – 1999, who was not a Bascologist himself, but was the spearhead of the functionalist school), René Lafon (1899 – 1974), and especially Luis Michelena (1915 – 1987). Basque linguistics in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, even after Michelena's death and in fact until the present day, is dominated by this prominent figure. Before I move on to comment on his work in some detail, however, I would like to observe that, in my opinion, Basque historical grammar has still much to profit, in several respects, from a deeper reading of Lafon's work. Some crucial keys to understanding the formation of both the nominal and the verbal inflections, such as the lack of grammaticalized categories of number and diathesis, were already pointed out by him, were later ignored—or very superficially considered—for decades, and only in recent years are they being timidly recovered. The explaining potential of these views in the light of the progress made in recent typological research is, as I see it, enormous.

Luis Michelena's work, and particularly his *Fonética Histórica Vasca* (1961), is the sieve through which any reconstructing hypothesis must pass be-

---

1 For a history of the linguistic work on Basque, cf. Trask (*HB*: 49-70).

2 It is perhaps worth recalling that Schuchardt vigorously opposed the Neo-Grammarians views.

fore being subjected to ulterior tests. It is with Michelena that diachronic research on Basque reaches the maturity necessary to locate any posed problem or hypothesis within the coordinates of the scientifically possible and reasonable. As Trask (*HB*: 67) pointed out, Michelena worked on practically every linguistic area: historical phonology, the verbal system, place names, personal names, etymology, syntax, genetic relations, Romance influences, dialectology, literary criticism, the word-accent, etc. And for practically all of these areas, his studies have been the starting point for further research in recent decades.

After Michelena's death, Basque diachronic linguistics came to an impasse which lasted for some time. Indeed, the impression somehow caught on that his work on historical issues was insuperable, and that little or no contribution could ever be made to the field beyond his work.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the 70s and 80s brought the generative fever, and —perhaps somewhat unexpectedly in a discipline like Basque linguistics— scholars' interest drifted towards synchronic issues.

In spite of all that, Basque philologists continued their meticulous labor, which brought major lexicographic and editing achievements. The accentual diversity of Basque, a realm in which Michelena insisted that research was still in its infancy, was carefully studied by Hualde in the nineties, from both a synchronic and diachronic point of view. And since 1995, upon the solid basis of Michelena's reconstructing paradigm, Lakarra has developed another paradigm which attempts to go even further back in the history of the language, taking the study of the canonical root as the keystone. This diachronic enterprise was also strongly favored by foreign Bascologists such as Roger Larry Trask (1944 – 2004), Rudolf de Rijk (1937 – 2003) and Georges Rebuschi. The premature death of the first two was particularly unfortunate for the field, as one cannot avoid the impression that they left us just when a discussion largely generated and fostered by them was beginning to become interesting, and that their participation in it would have been of the utmost relevance.

As a consequence of that perseverance, Bascologists are more optimistic today than several years ago about the possibility of obtaining fruitful results in diachronic research, and in the last ten years there has been a renewed interest in the field among scholars and graduate students (the contributors in this volume are a good token of this). In comparison to giants like Lafon or Michelena —to use the well-known metaphor attributed to Bernard of Chartres—, we may be dwarfs, but we are dwarfs standing on their shoulders. In addition to having their work already completed, we have more sources and more typological information than they ever had access to. The situation in this respect is also more

---

3 With regard to historical phonology, Trask (*HB*: 6) stated: “[s]ince Michelena, little remains beyond tidying up the details”.

favorable than that of 16 or 18 years ago, when Trask's *The History of Basque* (Trask 1997) and *Towards a History of the Basque Language* (Hualde & Lakarra & Trask (eds.) 1995) were respectively published. Within the realm of Basque philology and linguistics, several texts have been discovered, Lazarraga's manuscript being the most important. Dialectal research has filled some gaps that we had about archaizing dialects, and a number of inscriptions from Antiquity containing Basque onomastic data have also been found since Gorrochategui's canonical work on the issue (Gorrochategui 1984). While all this has not drastically changed the overall picture and we still have to face the same, at times demoralizing, scarcity of sources, the sum of all of these elements has enlarged our knowledge of several important aspects.

As Romance and Indo-European diachronic linguistics show, apart from the number of records we have, a prerequisite for progress is often simply that enough time elapses for scholars to process and arrange the information at their disposal. A Bascologist of 2012 is lucky to have, after many years of laborious work, a *General Dictionary of Basque* (Euskaltzaindia 1987-2005), in 16 volumes, with copious records from the written tradition for each lexical item, and Yrizar's *Morfología del Verbo Auxiliar Vasco* (Yrizar 1991-2008), in 15 volumes, which is virtually an encyclopedia of the Basque auxiliary verb. Similarly, in addition to the discovery of the new texts mentioned above, other texts that we already had but which had either remained unedited, or only very unsatisfactorily so, have now been properly edited and more profoundly discussed.

In addition to the progress made within Basque philology and linguistics, cross-linguistic typological research at an international level has also considerably advanced in the last four decades. Since the 1970s, new linguistic universals have been set up, some that were already known have been better attested, some others refuted, and still others have given rise to endless controversies between opposing views. By the same token, frequent grammaticalization paths have been discovered and/or discussed. Trask (1977, 1979, i.a.) was a pioneer in the use of these resources for diachronic research on Basque, but the bibliographical flood has been particularly copious in the last two decades. As a result, today we have essential handbooks such as Corbett (2000), Siewierska (2004), Bybee & Perkins & Pagliuca (1994), Heine & Kuteva (2002), etc., as well as many more descriptive monographs on particular languages or language families. A path of research which is particularly promising in relation to Basque, and which has begun to be systematically exploited by Lakarra and some of his disciples, is the study of serial verb constructions and their grammaticalization, especially into different postpositions, which in turn may become suffixes. Here again, without the assistance of contributions like Lord (1993) and Aikhenvald & Dixon (eds., 2006), such an enterprise would prove much more difficult.

By contrast, a field which has not rendered any helpful results for Basque diachronic research, at least as far as grammar is concerned, is its comparison with the Iberian language. The theory that Basque and Iberian are originally the same, or at least relatives, lost ground in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, first with the decipherment of the Iberian script by Gómez-Moreno in the second quarter of the century, and then with the work, critical of their relationship, by Tovar and Michelena in the 1950s. Some serious Iberists such as Orduña (2005) and Ferrer i Jané (2009) —and any reader who is acquainted with the literature which is often published in this realm will understand the relevance of the adjectivization of ‘Iberists’ here— have recently revived that line of research.<sup>4</sup> However, their analysis has mainly focused on numerals and some lexical items. Hence, even if we accepted their analysis, and/or even if we believed that Basque and Iberian were to some degree relatives, it would still continue to be true that Iberian has not yet been of any help in the elucidation of any aspect related to the historical grammar of Basque.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, Iberian data are barely mentioned throughout the entire work.

This book is an attempt to present a general picture, for both Bascologists and typologists —especially those interested in diachronic phenomena—, of the

- 
- 4 Against the possibility of such a comparison, see Lakarra (2010b). Orduña explained the similarities between Basque and Iberian numerals by assuming that the former borrowed them from the latter, whereas for Ferrer i Jané those numerals would be cognates descending from a common language. However, Orduña (2011) has recently adhered to Ferrer i Jané’s view on this particular point.
- 5 The Iberian attestations which have been related to Basque and which could theoretically provide some help for grammatical comparison are very few, and extremely dubious. Thus, an *ekiar* found in Caminreal (Teruel) and an *ekien* found in Mendigorriá (Navarre) have been related to western Basque *egian* ‘(s)he made’. More possible forms with this lexeme *eki-* ‘make’ are identified by Orduña (2010), who even suggests that an *eroki-*, allegedly a causative of *eki-*, might be the lexeme in two further inscriptions. Such a semantics certainly belongs to the narrow lexical scope which we expect to find in inscriptions, but the comparison with *egian* has, among others, the crucial problem that we reconstruct *\*(z)e-gin-a/e-n* for Basque, and hence we would expect the appearance of an intervocalic *-n-* —or at least *-h-*, which does not exist in Iberian— in *ekiar*, *ekien*, etc. Some other classical similarities with Iberian, such as the filiation suffix *-(t)ar* or the alternation *-n / -r / -Ø* are interesting and worth exploring, but still insufficient for helping us to better understand any grammatical aspect of Basque from a diachronic point of view. Another question which has not been settled is whether Iberian was a unitary language throughout the entire peninsular east —and if so to what degree—, or it only corresponded to a limited region within that area (perhaps that of the Contestani of Antiquity and some other tribes around them), and in other regions where Iberian inscriptions are found —such as those closest to the Basque-speaking territory— it was simply a *lingua franca*, as proposed by de Hoz (1993).

current situation of that research. Its structure, then, resembles —or at least is aimed to resemble— that of a historical grammar. Extra-linguistic issues such as population genetics or paleo-anthropologic research are left aside. While smatterings of Basque grammar, philology and culture can be useful for grasping some details, the work is intended to be comprehensible for as broad a public as possible. Hence, each chapter explains the linguistic features and facts in historical Basque, and the ample section of Abbreviations at the beginning contains a guide to the dialects and the main linguistic sources that appear throughout the work.

Chapter 1 (by Barreña & Ortega & Amorrortu) is a description of the Basque language today, in which an accurate account of the number of speakers and their percentages in each administrative region, and of the evolution of those rates during the last decades, is given. The socio-political background underlying all those data is likewise discussed, as well as the historical factors which have led to them. Finally, the sociolinguistic aspects of today's linguistic situation are described. Speakers of Basque are classified into different types, and an attempt is made to account for their subjective attitudes towards the language.

In Chapter 2 (by Martínez-Areta), the degree of intelligibility between Basque dialects is explained, they are enumerated one by one and the basic information about each one (its geographical situation, approximate number of speakers, degree of idiosyncrasy, the antiquity of the oldest sources, etc.) is provided. The issue of how many dialects there are is also briefly touched upon, but the diachronically most relevant section discusses at what chronological point a Common Basque can be postulated as the origin of all dialects, and how the branching process of those dialects may have occurred. Before entering the linguistic discussion proper, in Chapter 3 (by Ulibarri) a short external history of the Basque language is given. Since this also serves the purpose of describing the majority of the sources available to us for the historical research of Basque, this external history is complemented by two sections about dialectology and toponymy, which are two additional sources of linguistic evidence.

Chapters 4 and 5 deal with phonetics, phonology and root structure. In Chapter 4 (by Egurtzegi), the phonemic inventory of Basque in the historical period is described, and then the reconstructions proposed by Michelena for Proto-Basque, and by Lakarra for Pre-Proto-Basque, are set out. First, this is done for the vocalism, then for the consonantism. Finally, phonotactics and the old accent systems are also discussed. Chapter 5 (by Lakarra) is not only an explanation of the root structure in diachronic terms, but also of how its study has served as a starting point for the development of a new reconstructing paradigm at all levels. It also contains two appendices. The first consists of three tables in which all attested root structures are analyzed with respect to all their possible

theoretical combinations. The second is a sample of 50 proposed etymologies which exemplify most of the root structure processes defended throughout the chapter.

We move next to the morphological part of the volume, which comprehends chapters 6 to 9. Chapter 6 (by Santazilia) is a study of the Basque noun morphology, which sets out the noun paradigm of historical Basque and the structure of its NP, and then goes on to list the explanations proposed so far for every aspect concerning the formation of that paradigm: first the number/definiteness axis, and then the individual cases, classifying these into primary cases (grammatical and local), secondary cases (those built upon the allative and the genitive), and pseudo-flectional morphemes or non-cases. In Chapter 7 (by Martínez-Areta), demonstratives—in both their determinative and pronominal functions—and personal pronouns are discussed. The discussion about the origin of the former is considered in connection with the origin of the noun paradigm. As for the latter, of special relevance is the alternation between weak and strong (or even hyperstrong) forms, the syntactic/pragmatic conditioning of that alternation, and, in the case of the genitive forms, the origin, functioning period and decline of the Linschmann-Aresti Law.

Chapters 8 and 9 deal with the verbal morphology, splitting it into the study of the non-finite verb and the finite verb, as is usual in analysis, according to the structure of the Basque verb. In Chapter 8 (by Padilla-Moyano), first the morphological formations—by means of an ample array of allomorphs of diverse origin—of the participle, of the gerund (both built, at least originally, upon the verbal root), and of the prospective participle are explained. Secondly, the author discusses the origin of the different kinds of periphrases which resulted from the possible combinations of all those non-finite verbal forms with the different kinds of auxiliaries—built upon verbal lexical roots which over the course of time became auxiliary—, thus giving rise to a tense/aspect/mood system whose diachronic development from Common Basque to contemporary Basque is extremely interesting. In Chapter 9 (by Ariztimuño), in turn, the morphological structure and origin of the finite verbal forms—i.e. of both the synthetic verbs and auxiliary verbs of periphrastic constructions—are described and discussed. For that purpose, the different categories which intertwine in that structure, such as person, number, tense, aspect, mood and valency are dissected and analyzed both individually and in relation to the rest of the parameters. Then, one of the most characteristic features of the Basque finite verb, allocutive agreement, is covered, and finally the differences between auxiliary and synthetic verbs are discussed, both synchronically and diachronically. The chapter ends with a set of interesting conclusions and indications for future research.

In Chapter 10 (by Reguero-Ugarte), which closes the volume, the main features of Basque word order are summarized, first those corresponding to clause-level phenomena, which can be syntactically or pragmatically conditioned, and then those within the phrase. Some of the latter show diachronic and/or diatopic variation in the attested data, and hence a directionality with respect to the OV vs. VO dichotomy is worth analyzing, as it can provide us with important clues about the changes which have occurred in all the other parameters, including the phonological and morphological ones. Finally, the main hypotheses about the word order in Proto-Basque, which inevitably have to resort to internal reconstruction —focusing especially on the morphology of the finite verb—, are put forward.

For place names which have an equivalent in English, the form in English has been used. Obviously, it is not always easy to draw a line between those which have an English form and those which do not. Clear cases are e.g. Navarre and Biscay, but what about Cizain or Aescoan? In general, I have interpreted that the names of the provinces (*herrialde* in modern Standard Basque) and dialects can be given in English, and here this work differs from Trask (*HB*), in which e.g. the Souletin dialect is called *Zuberoan*. By contrast, town and village names are given in their official Basque forms (except in some cases such as Bilbao, where the Basque official form *Bilbo* sounds somewhat awkward). Elements from intermediate levels, such as subdialects, varieties or valleys are given in Basque (*Sakana*, *Deba Valley*, etc.), unless we have considered that they have an English equivalent. Obviously, this decision may be arbitrary in some cases (as is the case of *Roncalese*, *Salazarese*, *Aescoan*, *Cizain*, etc.). In the cases of town names in which the Basque and the Spanish/French official names are completely different (e.g. Basq. *Iruñea* / Sp. *Pamplona*, capital of Navarre) —not mere spelling (e.g. Basq. *Azkoitia* / Sp. *Azcoitia*) or pronunciation variants (e.g. Basq. *Sara* / Fr. *Sare*), or variants which are somewhat similar to each other due to their common origin (e.g. Basq. *Beskoitze* / Fr. *Briscons*)—, both variants are usually given.

As for the cited authors, the names of those corresponding to researchers mentioned in the references are spelled as they themselves signed their work. So are in general those corresponding to the linguistic sources, but this is not always done, and a justification for the election is not systematically provided. To give but one example, Lazarraga will be spelled with <z>, and its abbreviation will be Laz., even though he signed as *Laçarraga*, in order to strengthen the distinction from Lç. (corresponding to Leiçarraga), as they will both be frequently cited throughout some chapters of the text.

By contrast, the extracts of texts taken from the written tradition are given, for practical reasons, in the spelling system of Standard Basque, following the

procedure used in the *General Dictionary of Basque*. However, data from medieval documents, or even from later documents but which do not belong to the literary corpus proper —such as those found in archives, diplomatic collections, etc.—, are given in their original spelling.

Some of the abbreviations for dialects, authors and works have been inspired by the system used in Trask (*HB*) or in the *General Dictionary of Basque* (Euskaltzaindia 1987-2005), but the resulting whole is original, and is hence detailed in the Abbreviations. My final resolution comes across a couple of possible duplicities. One is B, which by itself stands for Biscayan, but in PB stands for Proto-Basque, in CB for Common Basque, and in SB for Standard Basque; the other is S, which stands for Souletin when referring to the dialect, but for Subject when referring to the clause constituent, and for Subject Intransitive when referring to the argument type. Since the context makes it absolutely clear which one is involved in each case, I have not considered it necessary to take any measure beyond warning against them at this point.

The chronological terminology which is used throughout the work contains two basic terms. One is Common Basque (= CB), which is the diachronic projection of all Basque historical dialects, and hence the old common language prior to the dialectal fragmentation, from which all dialects branched. Michelena (1987 [1981a]) dated it to around the 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> cc., and while there is no conclusive proof, it is commonly accepted since then that this might be close to the reality. This does not exclude, however, the existence of multiple innovations which have occurred after that period but which have reached all dialects. The other basic term is Proto-Basque (= PB), which would be a stage of the language prior to CB, commonly associated with Michelena's classical reconstruction of the consonant system. Much more arbitrarily, it is dated to the last centuries before the Christian Era, its chronological position being sometimes defined as the stage of the language immediately prior to the beginning of its contact with Latin. Throughout the volume, however, some authors stratify PB into different phases, which they can specify by adjectivizing PB with Old, Classical, Pre-, etc. In particular, Lakarra's theory of the root is to be located in a phase previous to PB, which can therefore be labeled as Pre-Proto-Basque or Old Proto-Basque.

This volume is a monograph published within the series of studies *Mikroglottika*, an international journal of minority language philologies printed by the Peter Lang Publishing Group, and co-edited by Raúl Sánchez-Prieto, Daniel Veith, and myself. As the editor of this particular volume, I would like to thank my co-editors of *Mikroglottika* Raúl Sánchez-Prieto and Daniel Veith for their encouragement in the production of this volume, and the publisher Peter Lang for their agreement on suggested ideas and their assistance in carrying them out.

The impression and a linguistic supervision of the text have been funded by the Department of Culture of the Government of the Basque Autonomous Community, to which the editor and the contributors of this volume wish to thank for their generous help. I am also thankful to Ruth Yates, for her patient reading and linguistic supervision of the text, and to Alphax Studio for the design of the figures and maps of Chapters 1 and 2. Likewise, I would like to mention that I belong to a number of research projects, within the framework of which this work has been carried out:

- 1) The research project “Monumenta Linguae Vasconum III-IV: historia, crítica y edición de textos vascos” [= FFI 2008-04516, FFI2012-37696], led by Joseba Lakarra and funded by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Spanish Government.
- 2) The research project “Historia de la Lengua Vasca y Lingüística Histórico-Comparada” (HLMV-LHC), Ref. GIC 10/83, IT 486-10, led by Joaquín Gorrochategui and funded by the Government of the Basque Autonomous Community.
- 3) The Training and Research Unit “Hizkuntzalaritza Teorikoa eta Diakronikoa: Gramatika Unibertsala, Hizkuntza Indoeuroparrak eta Euskara” (UFI 11/14), funded by the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU).

# 1. The Basque Language today. Achievements and challenges

*Andoni Barreña (University of Salamanca)*

*Ane Ortega*

*(‘Begoñako Andra Mari’ Teacher Training College, Bilbao)*

*Esti Amorrortu (University of Deusto)*

## 1.1. Introduction\*

The Basque language, called *euskara* by its speakers, is spoken by around 800,000 *euskaldunes* (speakers of *euskara*) who live on the north side (France) and south side (Spain) of the Western Pyrenees, in a territory called *Euskal Herria*, the country of the Basque language. *Euskal Herria* is divided into different political administrations: the Basque Autonomous Community or Euskadi (henceforth BAC), the Foral Community of Navarre, and the French Basque Country, which is part of the Department of the Pyrénées-Atlantiques.

The number of Basque language speakers has significantly risen over the past few decades, bearing in mind that only 30 years ago the Basque-speaking community was estimated to be of around 600,000 speakers.

This chapter describes the sociolinguistic development of the language over the last 30 years; examines the factors that have enabled the growth in the number of Basque speakers; reports on the language attitudes of the population towards Basque; and, finally, discusses the challenges the language faces in the light of what has been achieved so far.

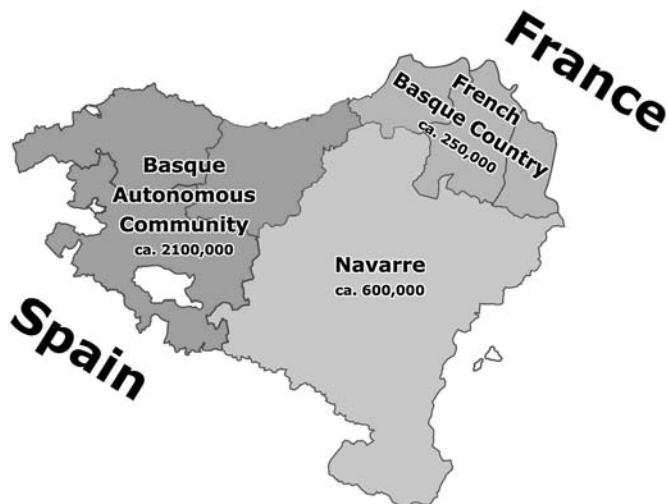
## 1.2. Sociolinguistic data of the Basque Country (*Euskal Herria*)

The Basque Country as a whole has a total area of 20,947 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of just under three million inhabitants, according to official census figures (Az-tiker and Soziolinguistika Klusterra 2011). Within this, the BAC has an area of 7,261 square kilometers and approximately 2100,000 inhabitants; Navarre,

---

\* The research on attitudes towards Basque reported in this chapter was commissioned and funded by the Language Policy Office of the Basque Government (Amorrortu *et alii* 2009). Funding was also provided by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Universities (MICINN bid FFI2009-13956-C02-01, program FILO). The authors would like to thank these institutions, as well as all members of the public who participated in the study.

10,420 km<sup>2</sup> and roughly 600,000 inhabitants, and the French Basque Country, an area of 2,992 km<sup>2</sup> and about 250,000 inhabitants (cf. Map 1.1).



Map 1.1. Euskal Herria territory (the Basque Country) and population.

The extension of the Basque language has varied over time and, although the Basque Country today comprises the above territories, the area where Basque or its past forms are or were spoken is known to have been larger in the past, spreading east along the Pyrenees, as far as the high basin of the Garonne River. Other boundaries are controversial due to the scarcity of sources (see Núñez-Astrain 2003 for details).

The population of the Basque Country barely exceeded one million at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the strong process of industrialization during that time, which in turn attracted a massive influx of Spanish immigrants into the BAC, led to a significant increase in population.

Massive Spanish immigration, together with the fact that Basque did not have official status until 1983, and the existence of long periods when the use of the language was prohibited, denigrated or rejected, caused the percentage of Basque speakers to drop to just 25% of the population by 1980.

Figures 1.1 and 1.2 show data collected by the official population censuses (1981, 1991, 2001, 2012) and the ‘sociolinguistic surveys’ (Language Indicator System of the Basque Country database) conducted by the Language Policy Office of the BAC Government (Basque Government 2003, 2008, 2009). These data reflect the evolution in the knowledge of Basque by the population of

the Basque Country over the last 20 years (Figure 1.1) —note that it is only for this period that global data for the whole territory are available— and linguistic competence in 2011 (Figure 1.2).

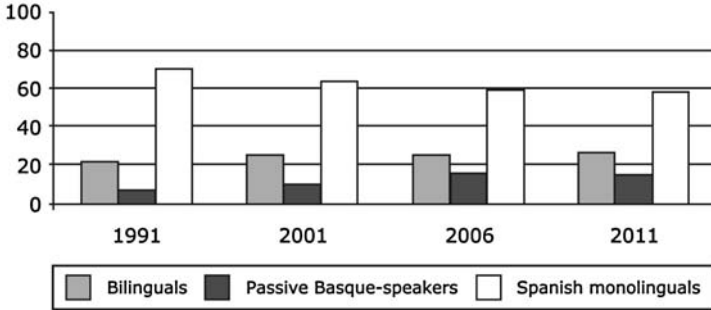


Figure 1.1. Evolution of knowledge of Basque in the Basque Country (1981-2011) (%): Basque speakers or bilinguals, passive bilinguals or bilinguals who understand but do not speak, and Spanish or French monolinguals. Source: Basque Government (2003, 2008, 2009, 2012).

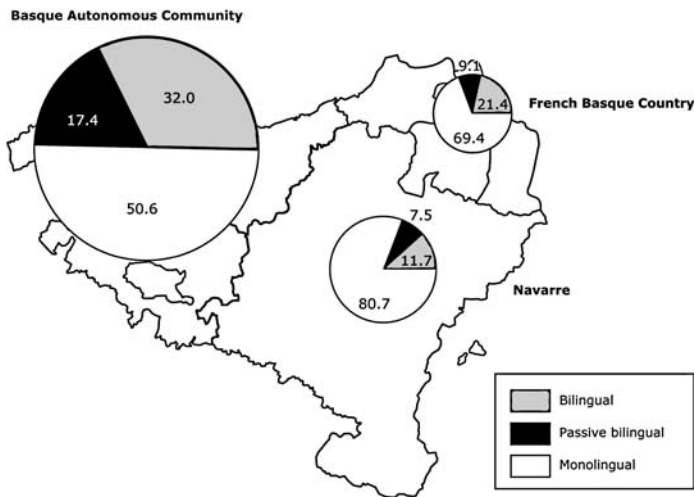


Figure 1.2. Linguistic competence in the three political administrations of the Basque Country (2011). Source: Basque Government (2012).

It is important to note that there is no monolingual Basque-speaking population, at least not one which is significant enough: there may be some elderly speakers with limited Spanish or French competence, but the percentage has no sociolinguistic relevance; on the other hand, there are also Basque monolinguals in the age group 0-4, but these will develop their second language throughout their childhood and, as a result, will cease to be monolingual at an early age. Thus, in terms of their language repertoires, Basque speakers are bilingual with Spanish or French.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Sociolinguistic Survey of the Basque Government (2012) shows the following data for the 15+ age group of the population of the Basque Country in 2011: more than a quarter (27%) is bilingual in Basque and Spanish or Basque and French and are, therefore, *euskaldunak* or Basque speakers; around one seventh of the population (14.7%) understands Basque but has difficulties speaking it, they are therefore passive speakers; and almost 6 out of 10 (58.4%) are Spanish or French monolinguals.

As can be observed from the data in Figure 1.1, between 1991 and 2011 the percentage of Basque speakers increases as follows: balanced bilinguals, from 22.3% to 27%, and passive bilinguals, from 7.7% to 14.7%.

However, this overall increase does not mean that Basque is developing in the same way in all three territories or political administrations. In the BAC, with data available from 1981, positive development is clear: balanced bilinguals have increased from 21.9% to 32% and passive bilinguals from 12.2% to 17.4%. In Navarre, the increase is much smaller: balanced bilinguals from 9.5% to 11.7% and passive bilinguals from 4.6% to 7.5%. And in the French Basque Country the opposite trend is observed, as the knowledge of Basque has diminished substantially: the percentage of balanced bilinguals has dropped from 33.1% to 21.4% and that of passive bilinguals has slightly increased, from 7.1% to 9.1%. Figure 1.3 shows the development of Basque speakers by territory. Note that the percentages for balanced bilinguals and passive bilinguals have been added together, from 1981 to 2011 in the BAC, and from 1992 to 2011 in the other territories.

The analysis of the data by age shows an important fact, that of the increase in knowledge of Basque, particularly in the younger generations. This increase is especially noteworthy in the BAC (Figure 1.4), where, for example, in the 16-24 age bracket, the knowledge of Basque rose from 34.1% in 1981 to 82.9% in 2011. During this time, knowledge of Basque also increases among the younger generations of Navarre, but much less radically, while it drops substantially in the French Basque Country.

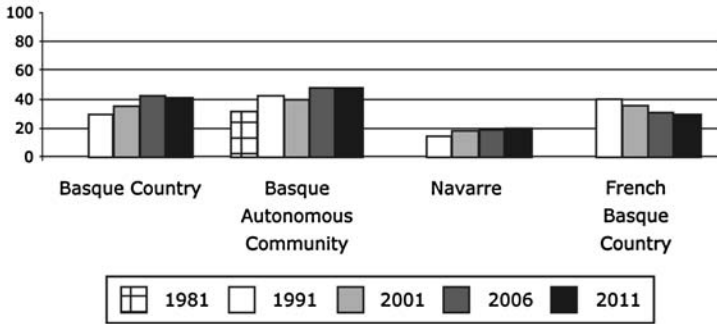


Figure 1.3. Evolution of knowledge of Basque in the different political administrations of the Basque Country (1981-2011) (%). Source: Basque Government (2003, 2008, 2009, 2012).

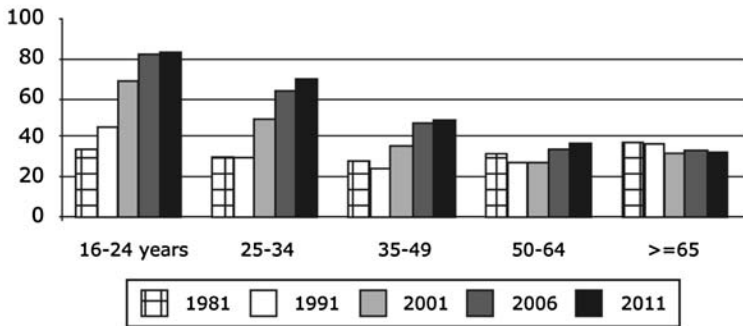


Figure 1.4. Evolution of knowledge of Basque in the BAC per age in population 15+: balanced and passive bilinguals (1981-2011) (%). Source: Basque Government (2003, 2008, 2009, 2012).

But language competence in Basque is not the only aspect that has improved in the last few decades. The minority language has also clearly gained domains of use since the beginning of the language policy which favors it, at least in the BAC. It is now used in the whole of the education system (from infant education to postgraduate university studies), in mass media (with two television stations, a daily newspaper and a great number of radio stations and magazines broadcasting exclusively in Basque), and in public administration.

However, use in informal settings and situations has not grown as expected (except for in Guipuscoa, the region with the highest percentage of bilinguals),

despite the big increase in the number of new speakers, and this is a cause for social concern, as will be addressed in §1.5. In fact, the percentage of Basque language use in colloquial interaction, measured in the streets all over the Basque Country, increased from 23.3% in 1989 to 32.7% in 2011 in Guipuscoa, but from only 3.9% in 1989 to 4% in 2011 in Alava, and in Biscay, from 8.1% in 1989 to 9.4% in 2011 (Soziolinguistika Klusterra 2012).

### 1.3. Factors affecting the increase in the knowledge of Basque

Among the factors that have influenced the increase in the number of new speakers of Basque and its better situation in terms of use, two important ones must be underlined. On the one hand, there was a powerful grass-root movement arising at the end of the Franco era, a movement of social and political contestation against the regime, which placed the loss of Basque and the rights of Basque speakers at the very center of its fight (Tejerina 1992): during the 1960s and throughout the 1980s, thousands of L1 speakers and non-speakers of Basque involved themselves in the promotion of Basque, creating Basque infant and primary schools, attending literacy and L2 Basque language evening classes, and engaging in all kinds of fund-raising and promotional activities whose main goal was the promotion of Basque language and culture in different settings. The beginning of democracy in Spain and the creation of the autonomous state allowed the establishment of a governmental language policy which implemented some of the measures already taken or promoted at grass-root level.

On the other hand, the introduction of Basque into the education system must also be highlighted as a crucial factor for the increase in the number of Basque speakers. Since Basque is a non-Indo-European language, and its linguistic distance from the dominant languages Spanish and French is large, the learning of the language in adulthood could not be expected to be enough for the recovery of the language. That is why the decision to make Basque mandatory in education has been so important and is probably the single most determining factor for the recovery of the language.

The Basque language, or *euskara*, had neither had any official status nor had it been a language of instruction until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Even though there were some attempts to instrumentalize instruction in Basque and to make Basque the administrative language during the Spanish Second Republic (1931-1939), these efforts were abruptly aborted by the subsequent authoritarian administration. It is only from the sixties that the model of immersion in Basque was introduced through the *ikastolas* or Basque schools, which were initially illegal or semi-clandestine. As a consequence of the excellent academic results obtained by the

students coming from the first *ikastolas*, and the generalization of the immersion models in Basque Public Education from the democratic era in the eighties, both *euskara* and Basque language education underwent an important expansion and a growth in prestige.

In 1979, the Statute of Autonomy of the BAC was proclaimed, and in 1982, its namesake for Navarre (Law on the Reintegration and Enhancement of the Foral Regime of Navarre). The Law for *euskara* was passed in 1982 in the BAC and in 1986 in Navarre (Intxausti 1990). These laws favored and fostered the use of Basque both in administration and education and contributed to its prestige. However, the two autonomous communities —the BAC and Navarre— have followed different policies, due to qualitative differences in the regions and also to the level of commitment to Basque by their governments and the extent of their willingness to support its development.

In the case of the BAC, the administration has made possible, broadly speaking, linguistic policies which strengthen Basque. In education, there are three linguistic models to be chosen by parents: Model A in Spanish with Basque as L2; Model B with both Spanish and Basque as languages of instruction; and Model D in Basque. Note that Model D is in effect a mother-tongue model for Basque-speaking children and an immersion model for Spanish-speaking children.

The success of models D and B, both in general academic results and in language competence (in Basque, Spanish and English), has led to its generalization, as shown in Figure 1.5. The fact that it is the parents themselves who choose the bilingual models is indicative of their involvement in the process of revitalization and of the growing prestige acquired by the minority language.

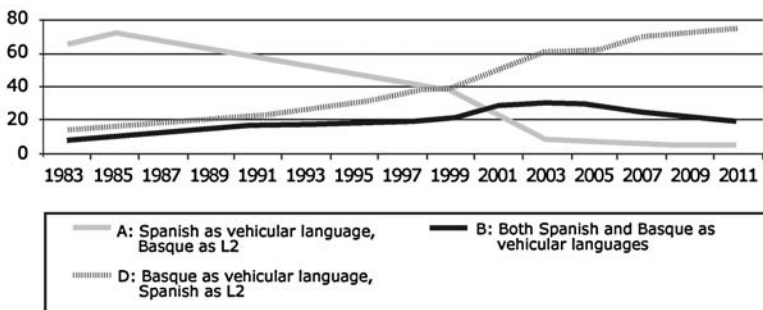


Figure 1.5. Evolution of enrolment at the age of 3 in the different linguistic models (A, B and D) in the BAC (1983-2011). Source: Berria (2011).

As can be observed in Figure 1.5, while the percentage of children enrolled in Model D has dramatically increased during the last three decades, Model A has clearly declined, even though the first language of children is still Spanish in most families in the BAC. Among the reasons that non-Basque speaking parents may have to enroll their children in immersion models, the following have been found (Amorrortu & Ortega 2009): commitment with the Basque revitalization movement and a wish for their children to integrate in the Basque-speaking community; the instrumental prestige gained by Basque, and the advantages these parents see in their children being bilingual; and the widespread belief that Basque is a very difficult language to learn as an adult, but easy for children, especially in an early immersion program.

It is the children of these bilingual models which account for the drastic increase in speakers discussed above. Whilst it is the parents who make the decisions in mainstream education, it should be noted that nowadays nearly 50% of university students choose to study in Basque.

The situation is different in Navarre. The Government of Navarre has adopted a zoning policy based on the different linguistic areas (Basque-speaking, mixed-speaking and non Basque-speaking), implementing different linguistic policies in each area. This has made possible, for example, the use of Basque in public education in the first two zones but not in the third one, a measure strongly contested by Basque language advocates in Navarre. On the basis of the above facts, the increase in the knowledge of Basque in Navarre has grown more slowly. In any event, the percentage of three-year-old children enrolled in model D had reached 35% in 2011 (Hik Hasi 2011).

In the French Basque Country, the Basque language has no official status or any form of governmental support, which places it in a really critical situation. Nevertheless, there is a grass-root movement which actively promotes the language and, with regard to education, there exist two types of Basque schools: the *ikastolas*, where Basque is the language of instruction and French is the L2, and *Ikas Bi*, a model in which both French and Basque are languages of instruction. Until recently, three-year-old enrolment in these schools was low, only 15.9% in 2006, but there has been a significant increase in more recent years, with figures reaching 30% in 2008.

In the territory where there has been clear progress, the BAC, the combination of individual and collective efforts, positive language policies towards the *normalization* of Basque, popular initiatives and support from people to Government policy, and the prestige achieved by the school system in the Basque language, are the cornerstones for the growth of Basque speakers and the increasing use of the language.

## 1.4. Positive attitudes toward Basque

The improvement in the general situation of Basque, at least in the BAC, is not only due to the commitment of society, but also to an improvement in the prestige of the language, as shown by sociolinguistic surveys and qualitative research on attitudes towards Basque.

The Sociolinguistic Surveys, which have been carried out every five years since 1981, clearly show that attitudes towards the promotion of Basque have improved, although in a different way across the three administrative territories. Surveys are useful indicators of general trends, but they have limited value for phenomena as complex as attitudes and the reasons for them. Qualitative studies, on the other hand, are still scarce but have yielded interesting results on how the different relevant groups perceive Basque and its recent developments. The following relevant profiles can be distinguished:

- a) *euskaldun zaharrak* or ‘old speakers’ (traditionally, native speakers from Basque-speaking backgrounds). The number of L1 Basque speakers (including those who acquired both Basque and Spanish/French in early childhood) has increased from 13% in 1991 to 22% in 2006 in the whole of the Basque Country, according to the respective Sociolinguistic Surveys. They are the speakers who feel the closest attachment to the language and who have the most positive attitudes toward Basque and its promotion. Their past and future importance for the maintenance of the language is unquestionable.
- b) *euskaldun berriak* or ‘new speakers’ (traditionally, Basque L2 speakers). It is estimated that more than 300,000 people have learned the language as an L2 in the BAC alone, where the total number of speakers has risen from 419,200 in 1991 to 755,640 in 2006 (Basque Government 2008), and mainly, but not only, thanks to the introduction of Basque in education through the immersion models, as discussed above. L2 speakers are especially strategic in the Basque case, given the low percentage of ‘traditional’ native speakers. This group will be further discussed in §1.5.
- c) *erdaldunak*, or non-Basque speakers. Although the number of non-Basque speakers has decreased in the last two decades (from 65.9% in 1981 to 45.2% in 2006 in the BAC; Basque Government 2008), their number is still very high. This group, although apparently the one with the least attachment to Basque, has played an important role in its promotion, as shown, for instance, by the increasing number of children from Spanish-speaking families enrolled in immersion models (cf. Figure 1.5).

The makeup of attitudes towards Basque will be more precisely illustrated with the group of non-Basque speakers, still a majority of the population and

allegedly the one that could be expected to be emotionally the farthest from Basque. The attitudes of this group should be a good indicator of how Basque society regards *euskara* and Basque linguistic policy.

A recent study (Amorrortu *et alii* 2009) on the language attitudes towards Basque in the BAC used complementary methods to collect and analyze the data: qualitative data obtained in focus groups provided an in-depth understanding of a large array of attitudes towards Basque and its promotion, and then some of the most salient issues were measured quantitatively in a survey. The study confirmed that the attitudes toward Basque and its promotion are generally favorable. On the one hand, there is a virtually unanimous consensus on the idea that the language must be maintained, with statements such as ‘Basque should not be left to die’, ‘I agree that Basque should be supported’ and ‘The use of the Basque language should be respected’, and considerable support for concrete measures to achieve this, as shown by statements such as ‘If a language in danger is to be saved, active measures for support must be taken, even if there is not absolute consensus about them’, ‘It is essential that public funds are used for the promotion of Basque’ and ‘The costs of the language policy in favor of Basque are reasonable’ (Amorrortu *et alii* 2009: 280-300, 325-329). The quantitative study also showed three different groups of non-Basque speakers with regards to their positioning towards Basque language policy and their level of commitment to supporting it (Amorrortu *et alii* 2009: 235-304, Ortega & Amorrortu 2010): the *more-in-favor*, the *more-critical* and the in-between *yes-but* group, the latter being a very interesting group which will be further described later in this section. On the other hand, negative associations towards Basque that could be found forty years ago have been reduced drastically, among them the perception of Basque as a non-modern or primitive language (only 1.8% of the sample agreed totally with the statement ‘Basque is a language of peasants’ (Amorrortu *et alii* 2009: 269). This is thanks to the greater presence of Basque in public life both at the macro-level of institutional policy and media, and at the micro-level, in daily life.

As well as this, the study also reveals a great complexity of attitudes, stemming from different experiences, opinions, beliefs, and ideologies. As mentioned above, a very interesting result of the study has been the identification of what has been called the *yes-but* group; that is, those who despite being generally favorable towards Basque and its promotion, set limits towards what is reasonable and may question some aspects of Basque promotion. Most speakers in this profile are non-Basque speakers, live in mainly Spanish monolingual areas, and do not have access to the cultural world in Basque. Their limits to Basque-promoting policy are often expressed by means of complex, lukewarm and even

sometimes contradictory, ideas. Here are some of the issues they brought up and their ideas:

- a) The yes-but position themselves in relation to Basque in particular ways. Their attitudes toward Basque and the language policy being carried out by the government are generally favorable, although they set limits, as shown in c). Regarding how they perceive the Basque language, while some consider it to be **the** language of the Basques, others believe Basque to be **one of the** languages of the Basques, together with Spanish or French:<sup>1</sup>

(1) *Well, I have always taken both Castilian and Basque to be the two national Basque languages, but on equal terms. (KA-B, 29)*

- b) Most yes-but are aware that they do not have access to the cultural world in Basque and some wish they could access it:

(2) *I know that I am losing out because I cannot speak Basque. (BI-B, 13)*

- c) They set limits to Basque language promotion and to governmental policy in general. Although they are generally in favor, they question measures they regard as extreme and set limits to some of the language policies implemented by the Basque government. Some of the ideas mentioned are: Basque should not be given priority over professional ability itself (3); the same language policy should not be implemented in all areas, and not the same should be expected from everybody (4); the recovery process is going too fast, there is a lot of pressure (5):

(3) *Well, I think... if I have to be operated on, I want the best doctor to do it, I don't give a monkey what language they speak. / I think it's what you were saying earlier, that when you go to the health centre you should have the option to be seen by a doctor who speaks Basque, that is important. But then, if we are talking about a surgeon... well, don't give me that, please. (BI-B, 121/123)*

(4) *I think it's fine that Basque is supported. It is culture, and all that is culture should be preserved and developed. But extending it to the whole of the population of Euskadi [the BAC], of Vitoria or Alava, which have a very different situation, or where what society wants is different, that is a very different thing. (GA-D, 70) [Note: Alava, and its capital city Vitoria, are the areas of the BAC with the lowest social presence of Basque].*

---

1 The translation from Spanish is ours.

- (5) *In my opinion... the problem I see is that they have tried to reverse the effects of that time of repression too quickly and to go from a situation where hardly anybody spoke it, only those who spoke it at home, to making it a prerequisite for a number of jobs. It is perhaps this which has caused some rejection among people.* (BA-C, 198)
- d) The yes-but are often people who have tried to learn Basque as an L2 at one point and, interestingly, feel that they need to justify why they did not succeed, often with regret.
- (6) *I was born in 1965, it was the bad times [Note: reference to the Franco regime]. I did try to learn, but I was very bad at it, could not do it. But I have made sure that my children go to Basque schools.* (ZA-D, 9)
- e) A number of simplifications and naïvetés that minimize the precarious situation of Basque are often present among the yes-but, for instance, considering that Basque can only have a happy future, in view of all the efforts taken to promote Basque so far, but failing to take into account the pressures that a language in the situation of Basque still faces. In addition, they often assume erroneously that knowing Basque guarantees its use. This misbelief will be addressed in more detail in §1.5.
- (7) *Well, it's just a matter of our generation disappearing, isn't it? Because, once we disappear, our children will speak in Basque and will speak Basque to their children, they will learn at home, and everybody will speak Basque.* (ZA-C, 122)

The results of this study clearly show how important it is to get to know the attitudes of the relevant groups in order to take the right steps towards the normalization of language: policy makers need to know what society is willing to do, as well as how to foster positive attitudes.

More studies are needed on relevant groups, specifically on new speakers or *euskaldun berris*<sup>2</sup> and the native speakers or *euskaldun zaharras*. Another strategic group for the future of the language is, of course, the young.

---

2 At the moment, there is a recently started study on the attitudes of new speakers of Basque: “Euskaldunberrien jarrerak, motibazioak eta identitatea / Actitudes, motivaciones e identidad de los neohablantes del euskera” (2011-2014), funded by the Bizkailab initiative (Diputación Foral de Vizcaya and University of Deusto) (cf. Ortega *et alii* 2013).

## **1.5. The situation today: fresh challenges in the light of achievements**

Following on from the description of the situation of Basque so far, this section attempts to discuss what has been achieved and what can be considered to be cause for concern, as well as the challenges Basque faces for the future. The following aspects will be examined: language use and the challenges for the different relevant groups, namely, the new speakers, the native speakers and the young; the importance of fostering positive attitudes towards Basque; the integration of immigrants and the presence of Basque in the new technologies.

### *1.5.1. Language use and language transmission*

The dramatic increase in competence in Basque in the BAC, especially in the under-25 group as already discussed, is very good news for a language whose critical mass of speakers was so low at one point, that this in itself was a fundamental obstacle for Basque speakers wanting to use their language. However, as reported above, the major concern is that its use has not increased in general terms as much as could be expected. Whilst the use of Basque in the BAC, and in Navarre to a lesser extent, has understandably increased in domains traditionally banned to this language (education, the media, etc.), the concern relates to the small increase observed in the private domain, typically, in interactions among family and friends. Before discussing this further, a note of caution is due here against naïve expectations: it was never reasonable to expect an increase in use proportional to the increase in knowledge, as language use patterns are often slow to change. Moreover, the opportunities to speak are still not always present today. This is certainly the case in Spanish-speaking areas. In fact, it is not surprising that it is in Guipuscoa, the territory with the highest percentage of bilinguals, that Basque is most used now; the greater opportunities to speak it will no doubt have something to do with this.

Concerns regarding language use have mostly been flagged in relation to two groups: the younger generations and new speakers. With regards to the young, it is a widespread perception among adults that ‘the young speak Basque perfectly well but do not use it’, something that seems puzzling to many: after the great commitment and effort of society to support Basque education as the best way to extend the opportunities to learn the language, it seems astonishing that those who have had such an opportunity fail to use it. With regards to new speakers, it is an obvious challenge that those ‘gained’ by Basque make it an active language and find opportunities to use it. However, the authors of this pa-

per believe that the use of Basque should be looked at in a more global way and that the ‘old’ speaker profile and their language choices should also be examined, as well as what happens in the different sociolinguistic contexts and communicative situations. It should be taken into account that the contact situation with Spanish and French as a whole has changed a lot in a short time and new language-choice and language-use patterns are also being developed. We will next try to unpick some of these issues.

**The younger generations** are without any doubt fundamental for the present and future development of Basque, indeed much is expected of them. As said above, they are perceived not to use Basque as much as they could, or in other words, that they use Spanish quite extensively. This applies not just to those coming from Spanish-speaking families and environments, but also to those living in Basque-speaking areas. As stated before, their linguistic behavior is regarded with astonishment as well as dismay, because much is expected of these new Basque generations, who are already establishing patterns of language use and who are the ones that will transmit the language to the future generations. But is this perception true and fair?

In the first place, it is only fair to say that it is not really known how the young use their language(s) among themselves. Moreover, different groups in different areas may be displaying different language-use patterns and it should not be generalized that the youth perform as one group. Some studies (e.g. Esnaola 1999, Amonarriz 2008, Ibarra 2010) report that youth talk often features extensive code-switching, which may be perceived by many as using ‘a lot of’ Spanish and not the heritage language, and failing to see it as a code in itself, without mentioning the stigma that often accompanies mixed codes. While such dismay is understandable given how much there is at stake, one must bear in mind that the young of today are not the young of 30 years ago, just because their experience with the two languages has been so very different. There is a risk of prejudicing the behavior of the young by applying the values, hopes and fears of the older generation, very different to those of the new one. It is crucial, therefore, to find ways to collect reliable data. Bearing in mind that the in-group speech of young people is very sensitive to adult observation, data collected by techniques such as participant-observation should yield truly trustworthy results that may or may not confirm the general perception. And when the results are analyzed, it must be taken into account that youth speech is by definition ‘transgressive’ and that usage at the age of adolescence to early twenties may not be a solid predictor for language-use patterns in adulthood.

A very different kind of evidence may shed further light on the issue. The number of cultural products created by and for the young is actually quite staggering: the schools of *bertsolaritza* —traditional oral poetry based on improvisa-

tion— are full of children and young people; performing groups of Basque dance are numerous and extremely popular; music bands singing in Basque, from the most traditional to the most avant-garde and fusion are plentiful and are followed by thousands in their concerts. This evidence suggests that Basque does indeed have a very important presence among the young.

Is there not, then, cause for concern? There is cause... for research. The development of the young Basque speakers must be closely monitored. As well as getting to know how their uses develop, as advocated before, it is also crucial to discover how they feel about Basque and Spanish, what the images associated with their two languages are, what attitudes and beliefs they have, and what their motivations are for exercising their language choices. Regarding beliefs, for instance, there is already some evidence that the under-25 group, for whom the presence of Basque in schools and society has been ‘normal’, may be under the impression that Basque is no longer under threat and that their individual choices make no difference; what has been termed the *rosy future* belief (Amorrortu *et alii* 2009). Should this belief be confirmed, awareness-raising action must be taken urgently, because of its harmful effects for the fate of a small language like Basque in the globalized world. Another challenge that Basque faces in relation to the young involves the images that they associate with Basque. As the above-mentioned study shows, the language seems not to be sufficiently associated with youth culture and what is *cool*. Rock bands, for instance, are very important, precisely for bringing the heritage language closer to the world of experiences of the young, and should therefore be supported.

Another strategic group is the **new speakers of Basque**. The term is understood here as a wide-reaching notion which includes any Basque speaker who has acquired the language by any means other than family transmission. Therefore, this definition includes very different profiles in terms of age and mode of acquisition, most notably, two main ones: those who have learned Basque in youth or adulthood, and those who, coming from Spanish-speaking families and sociolinguistic environments, have attended immersion-in-Basque educational programs from the age of early socialization.<sup>3</sup> The reason why these speakers are not in principle excluded from the definition is because many of them show a relationship with the language which is similar to that of an L2 in some respects (such as attachment to the language, self-image as ‘new speakers’, linguistic features).

---

3 In the BAC virtually 100% of children are schooled by the age of 3. Note that the data for the 2009-10 school year show that, out of the total number of children starting in Infant Education, 71.13% did so in the Basque immersion model D, 23.89% in the bilingual model B, and only 4.98% in the Spanish model A (Basque Government 2009).

Why this group should be strategic is obvious, as the increase in the number of speakers in the last 40 years is largely due to them. For this reason, it is of the utmost urgency to understand their attitudes and what they are prepared to do in favor of Basque. Right now, however, very little is known about them. Answers to the following questions seem crucial:

- What are their motivations to speak Basque, what are the obstacles or difficulties they experience when communicating in Basque, and, what are the circumstances that encourage usage?
- Little is known about the identity configuration of new speakers and their type and degree of attachment to Basque. How important is Basque to their identity? Do they feel close to Basque, proud to speak the language and to be part of the Basque-speaking culture, do they feel they have gained something special by learning the language? What is its relation to their L1, Spanish or French?
- For many of these speakers being ‘new’ is regarded as somewhat lacking and they may not see themselves as rightful and legitimate speakers of the language. What are the factors affecting self-image and legitimation? Is it a question of the linguistic variable (many new speakers’ variable is the standard *batua*, and not one of the vernacular dialects), a question of competence, the lack of opportunities to use the language on a regular basis...?

All of these ultimately lead to the most crucial question: will new speakers be active promoters of Basque, contributing to its maintenance and its development, and will they transmit Basque to their children (supposedly as well as Spanish/French)? Which profiles of new speakers will, and which ones will not? A recently launched three-year study (Amorrortu *et alii* 2011-2014, in progress, and the footnote in §1.4) intends to uncover the general picture and start answering some of these questions.

As previously argued, we believe that the issue of the use of Basque should be approached in a more global way, and should also include the **traditional native or ‘old’ speaker (*euskaldun zaharrak*)**, understood loosely to be those who have learned the language at home. Native Basque-speaking communities have ceased to lose speakers in the BAC and, to a certain extent, in Navarre (a trend that did not begin until the change in the political situation in the late 70s). This is excellent news. And not only that, but the cohort of ‘old’ speakers has increased in the BAC, for two reasons:

- a) The traditionally Basque-speaking group has consolidated due to generalized family transmission.
- b) Many Basque-L2 parents have transmitted Basque to their children as their L1 or one of their L1s. This generation is mostly in the under-25 age