Achievements and challenges in bilingual and multilingual education in the Basque Country

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This paper focuses on the use of Basque as the language of instruction. In the first part of the article the situation of Basque in the Basque Country is briefly described and the different possibilities regarding the language(s) of instruction are explained: model A with Spanish as the language of instruction and Basque as a subject; model B with both Basque and Spanish as languages of instruction and model D with Basque as the language of instruction and Spanish as a subject. Then, the results of research studies comparing these three models regarding achievement in Basque, Spanish and other areas of the curriculum are analysed. Finally the article considers the new challenges the Basque educational system is facing. One of these challenges is the need to go from bilingual education to multilingual education by teaching in a more effective way languages of wider communication. Another recent challenge is multiculturalism as a response to the increasing immigrant population which is a new phenomenon in the Basque educational system. The need for a more holistic approach towards multilingualism both in teaching and research is proposed so as to face these new challenges.

The Basque Country and Basque

The Basque Country spreads along the Bay of Biscay, north and south of the Pyrenees in France and Spain. The Basque Country comprises seven provinces, three belong to the French department ‘Pyrénées Atlantiques’ (Iparraldea) and the other four provinces to two autonomous regions in Spain (the Basque Autonomous Community and Navarre). The total population of the Basque Country is approximately three million and the most populated area is the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) in Spain with over two million inhabitants.

Basque is completely different from French and Spanish and is the only non-Indo-European language in Western Europe. French and Spanish are Romance languages and Basque is a language whose origin is unknown. This can clearly be seen when...
we comparing the translation of the sentence ‘*Do you work here?*’ in the following example:

- French: *Tu travailles ici?*
- Spanish: *¿Tu trabajas aquí?*
- Basque: *Hemen lan egiten duzu?*

Basque is a minority language which has miraculously survived in contact with two strong languages. It was widely spoken in most parts of the Basque Country and even in neighbouring areas in the Middle Ages but since then the territory where Basque is spoken has shrank as the result of contact with Romance languages. The Basque language, which did not have a strong written tradition, suffered an important retreat in the last three centuries and mainly in the twentieth century. Some of the factors that have made the Basque language weaker are political such as the ‘Spanish only’ policy during Franco’s dictatorship (1939–1975), but they also include industrialization and the development of communications and the mass media (see also Azurmendi & Martínez de Luna 2005; Cenoz, 2008a).

Nowadays Basque has approximately 800,000 speakers but practically all of them are also fluent in either French or Spanish. Basque is a minority all over the Basque Country and Spanish and French are the main languages also in the cities (Bilbao, Donostia-San Sebastian, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Biarritz, Bayonne, etc). Basque is used more often than Spanish or French in everyday communication only in some limited areas of the Basque Country.

According to the most recent sociolinguistic survey conducted by the Basque Government (Basque Government, 2008) there are important differences in the knowledge of Basque when the different areas are compared. In the following table we can see the percentages corresponding to the knowledge of Basque in the BAC, Navarre and Iparraldea according to the most recent survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BAC</th>
<th>Navarre</th>
<th>Iparraldea</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proficient in Basque</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive skills in Basque</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No knowledge of Basque</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
</tr>
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Source: IV Inkesta Soziolinguistikoa, Basque Government, 2008

The data indicate that the BAC is the area where proficiency in Basque is higher and Navarre is the area with the lowest proficiency. Most passive bilinguals, who can understand Basque but have limited production skills, live in the BAC. The data also indicate that even in the BAC more than half of the population over 16 cannot use or understand Basque.

There are importance differences in legislation regarding the status of Basque in the three different areas: the BAC, Navarre and Iparraldea. Political and social changes
Bilingual education is not a recent phenomenon in the Basque Country. Some schools in the BAC were bilingual or even trilingual (in Basque, Spanish, and French) at the end of the nineteenth century. However, the use of Basque was banned from education during the Franco regime (1939–1975). Despite legal strictures, in the 1960s, groups of enthusiastic parents and teachers fought for and succeeded in re-opening a number of private Basque-medium schools. These schools were not officially recognized in the beginning, but they were finally accepted because they had attracted so many students that they could not be ignored. Some years later, Basque, along with Spanish, was recognized as an official language in the BAC by the law on the Normalization of the Basque Language (1982) and three models of language schooling were established (models A, B and D). The use of Basque in education is more common in the BAC than in Navarre or Iparraldea. The rest of this article will focus mainly on the BAC.
**A model schools** are intended for native speakers of Spanish who choose to be instructed in Spanish. Basque is taught as a second language for 4 to 5 hours a week. These schools provide minimal instruction and, thus, minimal proficiency in Basque as a second language. Basque is learned as a second language and most of these schools are located in areas where Basque is used much less than Spanish so pupils do not need Basque for daily communication. This type of school is similar to many schools in many parts of the world where second and foreign languages are learned only in the classroom.

**B model schools** are intended for native speakers of Spanish who want to be bilingual in Basque and Spanish. With this aim in mind, both Basque and Spanish are used as languages of instruction for approximately 50% of school time, although there is considerable variation from school to school (Arzamendi & Genesee, 1997). Basque is the second language for all children in this model and it is not only a school subject but also the medium of instruction for other subjects. This model has some similarities with Canadian immersion models in which French and English are used as languages of instruction for majority group English-speaking students (Genesee, 1987). In both cases, pupils who are speakers of the majority have their L1 and an L2 as the medium of instruction. The B model is closer to partial immersion but the target language is a language of wider communication in the case of Canadian immersion and a minority language, in the case of the Basque Country. The use of a second language as the language of instruction for some subjects can also be found in many international schools all over the world (De Mejia, 2002; Carder, 2007). However, in the case of international schools languages of wider communication and not minority languages are used as medium of instruction. Situations which are closer to the B model can be found in other minority situations described in the other articles of this volume.

**D model schools** were originally created as a language maintenance program for native speakers of Basque. Basque is the language of instruction and Spanish is taught as a subject for 4 to 5 hours a week. The original idea was to give pupils with Basque as their L1 the opportunity to have their own minority languages as the language of instruction.

However, this model currently also includes a large number of students with Spanish as their first language. There are many possible reasons for Spanish-speaking parents to choose the D model. In some cases the language was lost in the family and parents are in favour of recovering Basque. Other parents feel that as they live in the Basque Country, it is a good idea for their children to learn Basque now that there is an opportunity to do so. There are also practical reasons to learn Basque as it is a requirement in some jobs. The fact is that an increasing number of Spanish L1 pupils have Basque as the language of instruction. The percentages vary depending on the area where the school is located. In some schools, most pupils speak Spanish at home and in others there are more pupils with Basque than Spanish as their first language. The situation in model D is interesting because of the mixture of both linguistic backgrounds. Consequently, Model D schools can be regarded as a very intense type of total immersion program for native Spanish-speaking students and a first language...
Table 3. Percentages of pupils in the different models in primary and compulsory secondary education in the BAC 2008–2009 (public and private schools)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A Spanish</th>
<th>B (B &amp; S)</th>
<th>D Basque</th>
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<tr>
<td>Primary (6–12)</td>
<td>8.80%</td>
<td>29.96%</td>
<td>60.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory secondary (12–16)</td>
<td>19.08%</td>
<td>27.54%</td>
<td>52.64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Basque Government Department of Education (www.hezkuntza.net)

* The percentages do not add up to 100% because a very limited number of students who are in the BAC for a short period do not study Basque

maintenance program for native Basque speakers. The distribution of students in the different models can be seen in Table 3.

The data indicate that the use of Basque as the language of instruction attracts most students. Model D with Basque as the language of instruction is the most popular followed by model B. Basque is more commonly used as the language of instruction in the lower levels of education. That means that the use of Basque as the language of instruction in secondary school is likely to increase in the future when these children get older. The distribution is not the same in different areas of the BAC but the trend to use more Basque as the language of instruction has taken place in all three provinces of the BAC (Araba, Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa).

Teaching through the medium of Basque has also increased in Navarre but it is more limited. Navarre is divided into three linguistic zones and Basque is the language of instruction for 88.12% of the students in the Bascophone zone, 30.13% in the mixed zone and 5.9% in the non-Bascophone zone (see Oroz & Sotés, 2008). The use of Basque as the language of instruction in the whole of Navarre is 26.28% because the Bascophone zone is less populated than the other two zones. The use of Basque as the language of instruction in Iparraldea is more modest and Basque is the language of instruction for less than 10% of the students (see Azurmendi, Larrañaga & Apalategi, 2008).

Just over 50% of school children in the BAC attend private schools (Basque Government Department of Education, 2008). These schools have very strong funding from the Basque Government but parents still have to pay a fee and this implies that there can be differences in socioeconomic background between public and private schools. The use of Basque as the language of instruction is very popular in both types of school but even more common in the public than in the private schools.

There has been a dramatic increase in the use of Basque as the language of instruction in the last 25 years if we take into account that only 20% of students had Basque-medium teaching (model B and D) when the models were established in 1982 (see also Zalbide & Cenoz, 2008). Parents can choose the model they want for their children, and each model is available in the public and private sectors but access to all three options is limited in some areas where there are not enough students interested in a particular model. One of the characteristics of the Basque-medium education is its spread in contrast to many other projects of immersion and minority language instruction which are not available for the whole population of a specific area.
The increase in the use of Basque as the language of instruction has had important implications for the educational system. Zalbide & Cenoz (2008) point out that important changes have taken place in the teachers’ proficiency in Basque and the development of teaching and learning materials in Basque. However, the success of using the minority language as the main language of instruction does not necessarily imply that students use it in everyday communication.

The outcomes of bilingual education

There have been a large number of research studies and evaluations of bilingual education in the BAC in the last 25 years. These studies have used different methodological approaches but most of them have analysed the linguistic and non-linguistic results of teaching through the medium of Basque, Spanish or both languages (see Cenoz 2008b). This is a major concern when there has been a major shift in the medium of instruction and also when Basque is the medium of instruction not only for native speakers of Basque but also for learners with Basque as a second language. An additional concern that is not shared by languages of wider communication is related to the fact that Basque is a minority language. Nowadays that Basque is the main language of instruction ‘Can you teach mathematics through Basque?’ is no longer common in the Basque Country but it was often asked in the past when Basque did not have a strong tradition of being used in academic contexts. In this section, we are going to summarize the outcomes of bilingual education in the BAC by looking at proficiency in Basque, proficiency in Spanish and other areas of the curriculum. In order to illustrate these outcomes the results of a specific study will be given as an example of the general trend found in most evaluations of bilingual education conducted in the BAC. The examples given come from an evaluation of the last year of primary school conducted by the Basque Institute for Research and Evaluation in Education (ISEI-IVEI). Participants were 2053 pupils aged 11 and 12 and the comparisons include not only the three different models but also the type of school, that is, whether the school is public or private (see ISEI-IVEI, 2006).

Proficiency in Basque. Several studies have focused on achievement in Basque across the models. The general finding is that there are significant differences in Basque proficiency when the three models are compared. Students in Model D are more proficient in Basque than students in Model B who, in turn, are more proficient than students in Model A (see Cenoz, forthcoming for a review). These are the most remarkable differences between the models. The ISEI-IVEI evaluation at the end of primary school measured listening, reading, writing, dictation, grammar and lexis. The mean obtained by the sample in the total score for Basque was 250 (range from 150 to 350). The distribution of the scores in the different models in public and private schools can be seen in Figure 1.
The results indicate that the language of instruction has an important effect on Basque proficiency both in the public and private networks. The best results are obtained by students with Basque as the only language of instruction and they are followed by those in the B model with Basque and Spanish as the languages of instruction and the lowest are found in the A model. These results are not a surprise not only because more hours of exposure can have an effect on proficiency but also because model D includes students with Basque as their first language.

**Proficiency in Spanish.** When studies have analysed proficiency in Spanish across the models, the general finding has been that there are no important differences. In contrast to the findings on Basque proficiency, the language of instruction does not have a significant effect on proficiency in Spanish (see Cenoz, forthcoming for a review of these studies). The main reason for this lack of influence seems to be related to the dominant position of Spanish in society. In fact, even students with Basque as their first language who study through the medium of Basque are exposed to Spanish in different ways. In many cases they are in close contact with students who speak Spanish at home but they are also exposed to Spanish in the media and in many cases in everyday interaction with people who do not speak Basque. Students with Basque as the language of instruction study Spanish at school as a subject but Spanish is taught in the same way as for students who have Spanish as a first language and Spanish as the language of instruction. The ISEI-IVEI evaluation at the end of primary school measured listening, reading and writing. The mean obtained by the sample in the total score for Spanish was 258,2 (range from 150 to 350). The distribution of the scores in the different models in public and private schools can be seen in Figure 2.

The results do not show a clear effect of the language of instruction on proficiency in Spanish. In fact, the highest and the lowest scores can be found in the A model where Spanish is the language of instruction. The results indicate that the differences that could be related to the socioeconomic status (public and private schools) seem to
be more important than the language of instruction. Only in the case of the private schools, more exposure to Spanish seems to be related to the results but the D model in the private network obtains higher results than the A and B models in the public network.

Other areas of the curriculum. Another important question when looking at the outcomes of bilingual education is to see whether there are differences in academic development in other areas. Evaluations of achievement in mathematics and the natural and social sciences indicate that the differences between the networks (public vs. private) are more important than the differences between the models (see Cenoz, forthcoming) An example of this trend can be found in the same evaluation of the last year of primary school in the case of mathematics. The results are given in Figure 3.

The results indicate that private schools do better than public schools in general and that the main differences are between the public and the private schools in the case of the A model. Once again the socioeconomic factors seem to be more important than the language of instruction. These differences between the networks have also been found in the PISA evaluations conducted in secondary schools of the BAC (ISEI-IVEI, 2008). The aim of the Pisa assessments is to develop indicators so as to compare the participating countries in subjects such as mathematics, science and literacy skills (http://www.pisa.oecd.org). The 2006 PISA assessment was signed up by 57 countries including Spain and there was a separate sample for the BAC. The were no differences between the results in the BAC and the average for the OECD in any of the subjects but the results in the BAC were significantly higher than the average results in Spain.

Another area that has received a lot of attention by researchers is the evaluation of results in English. A first foreign language is compulsory and a second foreign language is an optional subject in Basque schools in the BAC (Cenoz, 2005). Most students have

Figure 2. Spanish proficiency in the last year of primary education (IVEI-ISEI, 2006)
English as their first foreign language and French is very popular for those students who choose to study a second foreign language in secondary school. Some research studies have compared different models and have reported that students who have Basque as the language of instruction obtain better scores in English than students instructed through Spanish, the majority language (Cenoz, 1992; Lasagabaster, 1998; Sagasta, 2003). This effect could be observed even when variables such as general intelligence, motivation, SES and contact with English outside school were controlled (see Cenoz & Valencia, 1994).

In sum, results from evaluations of bilingual schools in the BAC indicate that using a minority language as the language of instruction results in better proficiency in the minority and similar levels of achievement in the majority language and other subjects such as mathematics. Higher proficiency in the minority language in the context of the BAC is equivalent to more balanced bilingualism because of the extended knowledge of Spanish. This knowledge of two languages gives some advantages when acquiring English as a third language. This effect can be explained as related to a higher development of metalinguistic awareness or learning strategies and it can also be linked to the fact that bilinguals have a wider linguistic repertoire that can be used as a basis in third language acquisition (see also Cenoz, 2003).

In the case of Spanish-speaking children who are instructed through the medium of Basque in the B and D models, these results corroborate results obtained in Canadian immersion programs (see for example Genesee, 1987). They show that when the first language is the majority language and has enough opportunities for development, it is possible to use another language as the language of instruction. Using a second or foreign language as the medium of instruction is considered a very positive experience in the case of international and European schools (Baetens Beardsmore, 1997; Carder, 2007). In all these situations, students achieve a high level of proficiency in the second language at no cost of their first language proficiency or academic development.
At the same time, the results of evaluations carried out in the BAC indicate that instruction through the first language in the case of native speakers of an indigenous minority language can be successful for their linguistic and academic development.

Using Basque as the language of instruction gives students with Basque as a home language the opportunity to develop their own language and at the same time Spanish lessons allow them to acquire the formal aspects of the majority language in society. This situation is in clear contrast with the situation in the past when Basque was banned from school and Basque speakers were taught through the medium of Spanish and did not acquire literacy skills in their own language. Apart from the situations described in this volume, there are many examples of successful teaching through indigenous minority languages in different parts of the world. Some examples can be found in Hawaii, Arizona, New Zealand and Latin America (see McCarty, Romero & Zepeda, 2006; López & Sichra, 2007; Hamel, 2007).

The A model has the students' first language as the language of instruction and Basque as a subject so it cannot be regarded as bilingual education but just as second language teaching. This model has very different results in the public and private networks and this has been related to socioeconomic status because the A model in the public network has more students than the other models from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. This factor is indeed more important than the language of instruction when analysing the linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes of bilingual education.

The challenges of teaching through a minority language

Using a minority language as the language of instruction faces many challenges. Some challenges are specific for minority languages, others are common in many other situations where a second or foreign language is used as the medium of instruction. In this section we will look at different types of challenges faced by Basque-medium teaching.

A first challenge for minority languages in education is legal recognition and funding. Basque has had dark times but nowadays it has a privileged position in the BAC as compared to many minorities around the world. It is a co-official language, it is part of the curriculum and it can be used as the language of instruction in models B and D. The situation in Navarre and Iparraldea is not as strong legally as it is in the BAC (see Oroz & Sotés, 2008). Spain signed The Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 1992 and ratified it in 2001 but France has not signed the Charter yet (Council of Europe, 2008).

Another challenge which is shared with many other minority languages is the use of a standard variety of the language at school. Many minority languages, including Basque, have a relatively poor writing tradition as compared to languages of wider communication and they have not been used to a large extent as languages of instructions or at the institutional level. This situation has not favoured the development of a standard. These factors together with the low social prestige of the language and
the geographical characteristics of the Basque Country can explain the existence of different Basque dialects in a small territory. The Academy of the Basque Language (Euskaltzaindia), founded in 1918, defined a unified standard variety of Basque called ‘euskara batua’ (unified Basque) in the 60’s. This standard variety is the most widespread variety of Basque and is generally used in official documents, the mass media (Basque television, radios and newspapers) and in literature. ‘Euskara batua’ is also the variety used at school, in educational materials and in the teaching of Basque as a second language. Nowadays, many teachers use other varieties orally but textbooks are usually in ‘batua’. The dispute about the variety to be used in education is not nowadays at the forefront because of its extended use.

Basque and other minority languages discussed in this volume also face the challenge of language use. Schools can be quite successful in teaching the minority language and encouraging its use at school but the use of minority languages as languages of instruction does not automatically imply that they are used in every conversation. In a way, the limited use outside the classroom also happens in the case of foreign language teaching but there are some differences between the two situations. Even if exposure to the target language outside school is similar and very limited in both cases, languages of wider communication taught as foreign languages are languages with millions of native and non-native speakers. In contrast, minority languages such as Basque, and the other languages discussed in this volume are only spoken as minority languages and if future generations do not use them they may just die out.

The 2006 survey of the Basque language shows that 25% of the population in the whole of the Basque Country uses Basque but only 9.9% uses more Basque than Spanish or French (Basque Government, 2008). Many speakers, including students, are proficient in Basque but they find it easier to use their first language, Spanish or French. Proficiency in a specific language is a necessary first step to use it but it does not mean that Spanish or French speakers are going to shift from using their first language to a second language for all purposes in everyday life. Some Spanish speakers have made a big effort to shift to Basque as a home language but many others only use Basque in some situations. The sociolinguistic context can also have a very important influence in language use. It is common for schoolchildren in Spanish-speaking areas to use Spanish among each other but Basque with the teacher even in the D model. There are special language policy plans for schools to promote the use of Basque (Aldekoa & Gardner, 2002; Zalbide & Cenoz, 2008) but the minority status of Basque in society cannot be completely counterbalanced by the work done by schools.

An additional challenge faced by minority languages is related to language attitudes. Developing positive attitudes towards language learning can be desirable in any context of second or foreign language learning but there are differences between learning a language of wider communication and a minority language because in the latter case it is also possible to communicate in the majority language. Learning and speaking Basque is considered an essential part of Basque identity by many speakers but some learners do not find it useful (see Azurmendi, Larrañaga & Apalategi,
2008 about identity). Some studies have reported differences in attitudes between the models. For example Aiestaran (2003) found that the attitudes of students in the B and D models in the non-Basque speaking area of Rioja Alavesa in the BAC were more positive than the attitudes of A model students.

Cenoz (2002) compared attitudes towards Basque, Spanish and English in primary and secondary school in a Basque-medium school in an area where Basque is spoken by 54% of the population. She found that language attitudes were more positive in primary than in secondary school but also that attitudes towards Basque were more positive than attitudes towards the other two languages. These results indicate that the level of proficiency, the school model and the sociolinguistic context can influence attitudes towards learning and using the majority language.

Some of the challenges faced by Basque and other minority languages are also found in many school situations in which a new language is used as the medium of instruction. One of these challenges is to have enough teachers who are proficient enough to teach through the medium of the target language. Nowadays approximately 90% of the teachers in the public network and 63% in the private network are fluent in Basque and hold the required certificate. Many of these teachers have learned Basque as a second language in adulthood as part of in-service training.

Another challenge of using a new language as the language of instruction is the development of teaching materials and appropriate teaching methods. In the case of Basque in the BAC, the materials have to follow the specific regulations of the Spanish Ministry of Education and the Basque Government Department of Education. Nowadays teaching materials include not only textbooks but also different types of software and audiovisual materials. Instructional methods in the different models vary depending on whether Basque is used as a medium of instruction or is taught as a school subject. In models B and D, where Basque is used as the language of instruction, the methodological approach is ‘content-based’ and shares many characteristics with the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) approach (for further information on CLIL see Marsh, 2007). Basque is also taught as a subject in models B and D and, in these classes, instruction focuses on Basque grammar and discourse and the study of Basque literature. Basque is a school subject in model A and is taught as a second language. The materials used to teach Basque or through the medium of Basque have been specially developed in the Basque Country and are not translated from other languages. The materials used to teach through the medium of Spanish are in many cases the same as those used in Spanish schools outside the BAC or Navarre.

From bilingualism to multilingualism and multiculturalism

So far we have focused on the teaching of Basque as a minority language but the Basque Country has also been affected by the spread of English as a language of wider commu-
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Communication all over the world and the increasing multilingualism and multiculturalism resulting from immigration.

English is not used in everyday life in the BAC but parents feel the need for the new generations to be proficient in English and they demand more instruction in English. One of the characteristics of the educational systems in the BAC and Navarre is the early introduction of English in kindergarten. The idea is that more years of exposure to English will result in higher levels of proficiency. However, research carried out in the Basque Country shows that when exposure to the target language is very limited (2–3 hours per week) younger children do not necessarily make more progress than older children (see García Mayo & Gardía Lecumberri, 2003, Cenoz forthcoming). A further development to increase exposure to English is to use English as an additional language of instruction. Depending on the model, subjects that were originally taught in Basque or in Spanish are taught through the medium of English. There are schools that were originally A or B model schools and now use the three languages as languages or instruction. Some D model schools have introduced English to teach some subjects that were originally taught through Basque. Teaching subjects through English is more demanding for the teacher and also implies the development of specific materials in accordance with the curriculum. The level of proficiency in Basque in models B and D as compared to model A indicates that the use of a language as the medium of instruction is a more efficient way to teach the language than to teach it as a subject even if it is taught from a very early age as it is the case with the A model.

Over the last years, an increasing number of immigrants from Latin America, Africa and some Eastern European countries have been coming to the Basque Country. The most recent figures indicate that the percentage of immigrants in the BAC is 6.5% and 12.2% in Navarre (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2008). The Basque Country which was quite homogeneous is becoming more multilingual and multicultural. Some of the immigrant students speak Spanish because they come from Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America but the arrival of speakers of other languages creates a challenge for the school system that already has three languages. It is difficult to predict what the impact of immigration will be on the survival of the Basque language. Most immigrants attend public schools and the percentage of immigrants who have Basque as the language of instruction is much lower than for the total number of students in the BAC (see also Etxeberria & Elogegi, 2008; Cenoz forthcoming). This creates a concentration of immigrant students in some schools, mainly in public schools in the A model. As we have already seen in this article, the results in Basque, Spanish and other areas of the curriculum were already quite low in the A model as compared to other models in the 2004 evaluation when the number of immigrants was not as high. The sample of this 2004 evaluation only included 51 immigrant students (2.4% of the total sample) and almost half of these immigrant students were in the A model in the public network. Nowadays, this concentration still exists but immigrant students are also distributed among the different models and networks.
It is clear that the boundaries between the A, B and D models designed in the early 80’s are nowadays blurred because of the increasing number of Spanish-speaking students in the D model, the use of English as an additional language of instruction and the arrival of speakers of other languages. The dynamics of bilingual and multilingual education in the BAC in the last decades has as a result the existence of more types of schools that do not fit into the typology of the three models. These different types are related to: i) the extent to which Basque and English are used as a medium of instruction and ii) the students’ home languages. Nowadays, the features of multilingual education in the BAC, Navarre and Iparraldea can better be represented in a model based on continua such as the ‘Continua of Multilingual Education’ (see Cenoz forthcoming for a description of the model). This model is a tool to describe different types of multilingual education and highlights the interaction of linguistic, sociolinguistic and educational variables. The basic idea is that different variables in the sociolinguistic context (both at the micro and macro levels) and the educational context can be organized along continua that range from ‘less multilingual’ to ‘more multilingual’:

![Continua of Multilingual Education](image)

Schools in the BAC have different positions on the continuum “languages of instruction”. Some schools have only one language of instruction (Basque or Spanish) and can be placed towards the less multilingual end of the continuum on this variable. Other schools have two languages of instruction: Basque and English, Basque and Spanish, Spanish and English and others three languages of instruction (usually Basque, Spanish and a foreign language which is English in most cases). The more languages of instruction a school has the more multilingual its position is along the continuum. Another factor to be taken into account when defining a school as more or less multilingual refers to the integration of the different languages in syllabus design and language planning so that schools planning together and coordinating the teaching of the different languages of instruction are more multilingual. Other factors are the age in which the different languages are introduced, multilingual proficiency of the teachers or their specific training for multilingual education. The Continua of Multilingual Education does not establish hard boundaries between models and can account for the dynamics of bilingual and multilingual education because continua allow for fluidity along the points of the continua (see also Hornberger, 2007).

**Future directions**

The Continua of Multilingual Education is a tool to classify bilingual and multilingual schools from a holistic perspective, taking into account the languages taught at school,
the home languages and the sociolinguistic context in which the schools are located. Basque schools have moved from bilingualism to multilingualism in the last years because of the importance of English, the study of French as a fourth language and the arrival of students who speak other languages. In this section a holistic approach will be proposed for research on minority languages.

Adopting a holistic perspective in the study of bilingualism was also proposed by Cook (1995, 2002). According to Cook, bilinguals (and multilinguals) have a unique form of language competence that is not necessarily comparable to that of monolinguals because learning a second or additional language has an influence on the whole cognitive system. Second language users possess unique forms of competence, or competencies, in their own right and should not be seen as the sum of two monolinguals. This perspective has important consequences for the evaluation of proficiency in Basque, Spanish and English in the BAC. Traditionally the reference used in the evaluation of languages has been the educated native speaker of each of the languages. Basque students have been evaluated against the yardstick of an ideal monolingual speaker of Spanish and an ideal monolingual speaker of Basque. According to the evaluations, Basque L1 students who speak Basque at home, use Basque as the language of instruction and live in a Basque-speaking area obtain a very good command of Spanish. However, it may be unrealistic that they achieve exactly the same level of proficiency in Spanish as other students who use Spanish for all purposes all the time except for a very limited number of hours of Basque and English lessons at school (see for example Santiago et al, 2008). Similarly, it cannot be expected that Spanish L1 students who speak Spanish at home and in everyday communication reach the same level of proficiency as Basque speakers even if they have Basque as the main language of instruction (ISEI-IVEI, 2005). If we adopt a holistic view of multilingual proficiency students in the Basque educational system could be evaluated as multilingual speakers who have a linguistic repertoire which is different from that of monolinguals. This linguistic repertoire can also include the home languages of immigrant students and foreign languages such as English or French. A holistic perspective in evaluation and research can also be appropriate to analyse the results of new projects that are integrating the different languages in the curriculum. As Elorza & Muñoa explain (2008: 91) an integrated curriculum ‘transfers, applies and generalises what has been learned in one language to the others’. A holistic view of multilingual proficiency as a reference is more challenging and difficult to put into practice in syllabus design, teaching practice and assessment but it approaches the teaching of different languages from a more realistic approach.

Another point which is related to a holistic approach and which is a real challenge for Basque and other minority languages has to do with the new ways of communication and the effects of new technologies and globalization. Nowadays, the boundaries between languages are soft in daily communication because of the spread use of English and other languages in the media and advertising as it has been seen in studies of the linguistic landscape (Gorter, 2006; Shohamy & Gorter, 2008). At the same time
new technologies have blurred the boundaries between oral and written language and have influenced the use of multiple codes combining symbols, images, sounds and printed text. Shohamy (2006: 172) highlights the idea of hybridity in communication resulting from mixing languages and multimodality derived from mixing codes. Students in Basque schools and elsewhere make use of these new types of communication when they interact with their friends and mainly when they use new ways of communication (chats, SMS, etc). From a holistic perspective this is also part of communicative competence and it can be important to conduct research on the use of Basque (and other minority languages) not only in formal settings at school but also in everyday communication between students. The use of Basque in these situations will probably be part of a type of competence where hybridity is salient.

The use of Basque as the main language of instruction in the BAC is well established nowadays. The results of the evaluations show that it is possible to acquire a high level of proficiency in Basque and Spanish by having Basque as the main language of instruction. Teaching through Basque is also compatible with good levels of achievement in other school subjects. However, education in the BAC as elsewhere in the world is a dynamic process and faces new challenges nowadays. In this article we suggest that a more holistic approach to research can be more suitable to understand the increasing diversity of a more multilingual and multicultural world.

Acknowledgements

This article has been written as part of the contribution to the European 6th Framework network of excellence Sustainable Development in Diverse World (sus.div). Some of the studies reported in this article have been supported by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation grant HUM2006-09775-C02-01/FILO and Basque Government grant IT-202-07.

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