

# Language and economy. Market for symbolic exchange and consumption of linguistic products in Euskera

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## Abstract

The object of this article is to analyse the relationship between economic factors and language in the case of Euskera (Basque) and the changes that have occurred in its market value in the light of the recently implemented recuperation of the language. The idea that I want to explore is that Euskera has recovered vigour in recent years thanks to public intervention and social support for its promotion in a linguistic market dominated by two big international languages, French and Spanish but still not in a position to do without the official support nor the demand for fostering and protection of Euskera from broad sectors of society.

## Summary

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## 1. Introduction

When I consider the relationship between language and economy, I never cease to be surprised to see how few studies exist, and to note the lack of systematic research into language choice, identity and market. Why should this be so? In my opinion, there are several reasons. In the first place, because the polemical relationship between language, identity and politics has dominated (or, monopolised, I would say) the thinking of scientists and investigators; in second place, because once a linguistic market is in place, through the imposition of a legitimate language by the nation-state, this fact becomes a given, relegating the original symbolic violence to oblivion and intervening in its favour by preaching the need ostensibly to further linguistic exchange and communication and, in third place there is the fact that minority languages are in a state of economic dependence to such an extent that we are impeded from thinking of most of them in terms of linguistic markets not needing public intervention to sustain them.

Nowadays, there are increasing indications of the autonomy of a linguistic market that has grown up around Euskera. I shall present the results of this initial exploration, discussing the origin of this revitalisation of the Basque language; secondly I shall look at the language engineering and planning of the 80s and 90s. And in third place I shall be looking at Euskera and its market, in terms of linguistic practice in the world of production and work, and the market specifically for Euskera, that is, the products of the linguistic and cultural industry associated with Euskera/Basque.

## 2. Language, institution and market of linguistic exchanges

Language as an institution is a process of economy of content (the obviating or simplification of complexity). When Berger and Luckmann explain the origins of institutionalisation by referring to the *habituation* (converting action into habit) that underpins all human activity, they remind us that "every act that is frequently repeated, creates a pattern that can then be repeated with economy of effort and which is, ipso facto, learned as a pattern by the one who carries it out" (Berger and Luckmann, 1979: 74). These processes of habituation retain their meaningfulness for the individual but with a great saving in spending and investment; "habituation offers the great psychological advantage of restricting the options. While there might in theory be one hundred different ways of building a canoe with paddles, habituation

will restrict these to a single way, which frees the individual from the burden of 'all these decisions', providing psychological relief based on the structure of Mankind's non-directed instincts. Habituation provides the route and the specialisation in the activity that is lacking from Man's biological equipment. This in turn alleviates the accumulation of tensions arising from non-directed impulses. A stable backdrop against which human activity can go forward with in most cases a minimal margin of decisions, frees energy for the more significant decisions that may be required in certain circumstances (...). In accordance with the meaning that man endows his activities, habituation makes it unnecessary to define every situation anew, step by step" (Berger and Luckmann, 1979:75).

Language is the fruit of this habituation, and it becomes institutionalised when there appears a reciprocal typing or classification of actions that become habitualised, and this reciprocal typing of actions gets constructed in the course of a shared history. This dimension is important in the study of language, given that the extension and distribution of these typologies will be very variable within a society, and, in the case of multilingual speakers, may lead to linguistic preferences based on the knowledge, communicative skill and ease of expression in a particular linguistic code.<sup>1</sup> This constitutes the first or primary relationship between language and economy.

There is a second relationship between economy and language that can be discerned, and this has more to do with the political economy of the language. That is, with the principles informing the regulation of the language market. It is this that Bourdieu refers to when he affirms that the official language came into being linked with the State -both in its genesis and in terms of its social uses. The state language becomes the theoretical norm by which all other linguistic practices are objectively measured. It is during the constitution of the State that the conditions for the creation of a unified linguistic market are created, dominated by the official language: obligatory on official occasions, and in official places (schools, public administration, political institutions, etc.), and it is in this way that the state language becomes, as we have said, the theoretical norm by which all linguistic practices are objectively measured. It is assumed that no one is ignorant of linguistic law, which has its body of legal experts, its grammars, and its agents of control. The latter are the school teachers, invested with a special power: that of universally scrutinising and applying the legal sanction of the school diploma to the linguistic results of the speaker-subjects under their aegis" (Bourdieu, 1999:19-20).

For one particular form of expression among others (in the case of bilingual societies one particular language) to impose itself as the only legitimate one, the market has to become unified. Political institutions (political intervention) generate the integration of individual speakers into the same linguistic community by means of the imposition of the universal recognition of the dominant language.

It is political intervention (political economy of the language) that constitutes a unified linguistic market, and in the case of multilingualism a linguistic hierarchy. Political intervention contributes to "the fabrication of the language that the linguists accept as a natural datum /"given" without imputing to it all responsibility for the generalisation of use of the dominant language and cultural production and circulation" (Bourdieu, 1999: 24).

The school system (military in some instances) has the task of extending knowledge of and guaranteeing recognition of legitimate language or languages. "The school system has been delegated the authority necessary to be able to act universally to inculcate matters of language to lasting effect, and tends to provide the duration and intensity of this action to the inherited cultural capital. As a result, the social mechanisms of cultural transmission tend to insure the reproduction of the structural difference between the (very uneven) distribution of knowledge of the legitimate language and the much more uniform distribution of the recognition of this language, constituting in this way one of the determining factors of dynamics of the field of language, and thus of changes in the language" (Bourdieu, 1999: 36).

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<sup>1</sup> See sections three and five.

I would accept what Bourdieu says here in its entirety, but add that his vision does not exhaust the possibilities for the study of language change. He focuses on the relationships of dominance between languages (official-not official, dominant-not dominant) but what interests me, at this moment, is to indicate that dominated languages have their own dynamic, even from a position or place of subordination. This is the third meaning that can be read into the relations between economy and language, having to do with the economic policy of linguistic exchanges, that is, with the practices of the actors in the marketplace of linguistic exchange. On occasions, it is the very realisation, the raising of awareness, of a situation of subordination in which a language finds itself which sparks off the processes of reversal and linguistic change. We will be looking in some detail at how all these elements have functioned in the case of Euskera<sup>2</sup>.

### 3. The origin of the recent recovery of Euskera

Elsewhere I have entertained the hypothesis that it is the traumatic realisation of the impending loss of the language as a medium of communication (at the height of the Spanish post-war period, in the 50s) that brought about re-appreciation of the value of the language as a symbol of collective identity which drove many people to learn Euskera and others to use it more, despite the political limitations imposed on its learning and use (Tejerina, 1992).

This process was not connected with economic issues and came about in a context of lack of a true linguistic market, since the public scene is dominated by the promotion of the official language and the denial of the other non-official languages. Indeed, this happened in a context of hardship and economic want of all kinds, making the teaching and dissemination more difficult. Notwithstanding, in the 60s and above all in the 70s there was a recovery which was observable in connection with three factors: a) the setting up of the *ikastolas* (Basque-medium schools), b) classes for adults (adult literacy classes), and c) the publication of books in the language (cultural production).

Euskera in the Basque Country had been losing ground as a medium of communication (communicative function)<sup>3</sup> for quite a few decades, ceding territory before the advance of other languages, with the percentage of speakers of Basque out of the total population steadily dropping, disappearing or decreasing its use in particular social settings, etc. The features presented by that language situation allow us to put forward a hypothesis: the Basque language had been undergoing a steady decrease in its communicative function. Then, during the Franco regime (1939-1975) the language was subjected to repression and political pressure which only accentuated the decrease in its communicative function. This political pressure made individuals more aware of the loss of the language. If loss of the language is experienced in a traumatic way, this will result in a raising of awareness of the loss of the language's communicative function. Raising of awareness of this loss, on the one hand, will bring about a growth in the participative function (affective attachment to the language as a symbol of belonging to the group) through social mechanisms which constitute the group's structure of plausibility: family, friends, associations, etc. This is where the symbolic role of the language is an important element making up collective the group's collective identity. On the other hand, the communicative function of the language will decrease less as a consequence of the influx of participatory function will act at two levels: raised awareness of language loss may firstly move those individuals who know the language to use the language more, and secondly increase motivation to learn the language on the part of those who do not know it. It could also happen, especially among those that do not find loss of the language traumatic, that they progressively reduce or cease its utilisation, either because they are not aware of the process of loss or, if they are conscious of it, because they do not find the language shift upsetting, or because they find personal motives or social conditions favouring the use of the other language and the relinquishing of one's own.

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<sup>2</sup> For an analysis of the different social factors bearing on Euskera down through history, see Euskaltzaindia (1977) and Tejerina (1992).

<sup>3</sup> The distinction between communicative and participatory function of symbols is taken from Guy Rocher.

Three social manifestations emerged as the most important in the raising of awareness of the language's loss of communicative function and of the need to recover this which occurred during Franco's time. These were: the setting up of the *ikastolas* (Basque-medium schools), the adult literacy classes and Euskera classes for adults, and the increase in the number of publications in the Basque language. Other important developments were the linguistic unification of Euskera and the renewed dynamism of the scientific and cultural institutions that had entered into a prolonged state of lethargy after the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). Let us focus on the first group of manifestations.

The most important of these, having the greatest symbolic force in the recovery of the language was the emergence of the *ikastola* as a scholastic institution with the mission of educating and socialising the rising generation in Euskera. The Euskera language had not been granted admittance to the educative system and, on occasions, the educational system had become a powerful instrument in the repression of the language's use both in the school and in the social sphere. However, the introduction of Basque into the school setting had received some support ever since the beginning of the twentieth century. The first bilingual school of which we have information dates from 1903, but it was from 1957 onwards when the first *ikastola* of the post-war period was opened, that the popular movement in favour of the culture really got underway. The primary objective here was the foundation of *ikastolas* for the teaching of Basque outside the state schools and private schools.<sup>4</sup>

Between 1960 and 1975, 160 *ikastolas* were opened. The period between 1969 and 1972 was the most dynamic of all in this respect. Apart from the number of *ikastolas* that have appeared up and down the Basque Country with an intense concentration in Guipuzkoa and Biskaya (Bizkaya) provinces, the fact is that their very existence took on a three-fold social meaning: a) as a symbolic reference point for a culture that was going through moments of identity crisis, b) as a cultural codification of collective cultural identity, and c) as a mythical redoubt for Basque identity in a situation of repression.

Euskera had been maintained as a language in daily use in the family, in certain areas of population, and in certain church settings. Fostered by these two social ambits, the family and the church, and marginalized by the school system and official politics, Euskera transmitted a particular codification of Basque cultural identity, that is to say, the *Euskaldun* culture (to use the Basque term) and the collective identity that sank its roots into that culture. Which does not mean that Euskera did not have great meaning, as a medium of cultural codification, in social relationships and in the political order.

During Franco's regime a whole series of factors were brought to bear that had as their most immediate consequence the erosion of the *Euskaldun* cultural reference; and, at the same time, "the rural culture, progressively dominated and dismissed as retrograde or as a hang-over from the past, was to suffer its corresponding identity crisis. These factors were the repression suffered by Euskera in the schools, the questioning of *Euskaldun* culture that bourgeois pragmatism in itself represented, the process of structural alteration produced by industrialisation, urbanisation and the influx of migrants, and the increased cultural, administrative and political pressure from the Central (that is, Spanish) State".

The collective identity crisis is the result of the processes of change and transformation that were occurring in the social structure of Basque society during the 50s and 60s. In reality, this cultural identity crisis is the identity crisis of the society itself, but, above all, the social definition of the said cultural identity, *Euskaldun* identity, whose reference point was the social structure of traditional society, rural society, where it was still possible to find parity or equivalence between cultural identity and *Euskaldun* culture. This identification between *Euskaldun* population and territory was effectively broken by the impact of immigration: "Immigration [basically migration within the Spanish state] which was already noted as a disruptive invasion within the original nationalism, was destined to become an authentic physical alteration of the potentially *Euskaldun* population. In the 60s the *Euskaldun* provinces of Guipuzkoa and Biskaya experienced increasing percentages of (Spanish) immigrant population in the urban industrial conurbations. The immigrants in question came from areas with no connection with Basque culture; at the same time there were large-scale shifts of population within the region which seemed to bring about unprecedented changes in a basic equation in Basque identity: that of *Euskaldun* population and *Euskaldun* population." (Arpal *et al.*, 1982:44).

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<sup>4</sup> For a study of the role of the *ikastolas* at this time see Arpal, J.; Asúa, B. and P. Dávila (1982).

It was in this context of Basque crisis of identity, raised to a conscious level, that, paradoxically, the need for cultural and linguistic recovery was articulated. The impact on Basque society was such that it came to mark a whole generation, a decisive moment of maximum demand for the participatory, communicative function of the language, which made any attempt to fully meet the demand to learn Euskera all but impossible.<sup>5</sup>

The third indicator of the culture renaissance is the growth in the bibliographic production in Euskera: the 25 books published, for example, in the year 1960 became 154 in 1975, representing a 616% increase in 15 years. From the 90s onward, around 1,200 titles have been published annually.

#### 4. Intervention and planning in the 80s and 90s

In synthesis, an inventory of the linguistic changes undergone by Euskera in the Basque Autonomous Community would feature the characteristics that we consider here. To a great extent they are the result of public intervention and language planning<sup>6</sup> knowledge of Basque has extended in the last two decades. One in every three Basque speakers acquired Basque over this period. Knowledge of Basque is advancing in all of the counties making up the three Historic Territories of the Basque region: Araba, Biscay and Gipuzkoa: the percentage of Euskalduns (Basque speakers) has increased by ten percent. The greatest concentration of new Euskalduns is in Araba.

The changes that have occurred from one generation to the next are also very notable. While the percentage of Basque speakers is dropping in the oldest age group, among middle aged speakers this is remaining stable, and among young people there has been a marked recovery.

The decrease in the proportion of Basque speakers in the Basque Autonomous Community occurred in the middle decades of the twentieth century as a result of social and political pressure brought to bear on Euskera within the framework of a totalitarian regime, of the voluntary or forced abandoning of Euskera by some Euskalduns as an outcome of the pressure exercised within the educational and cultural system (an important aspect in this process of loss of attachment to the language was its absence or low prestige compared to other alternatives), the internal migrations from rural to urban areas and to other countries, and the demographic growth which made it possible for the Basque Autonomous Community to absorb significant influxes of population during the 50s and 60, boosting industrial and economic growth.

In recent years the transmission of the language from parents to children has been maintained, although in this respect there are big differences between one territory and another since the majority of those who have Basque as their mother tongue live in Guipuzkoa, while those who live in Araba (southern Basque Country) constitute less than 3% of the population. Reproduction of the language in the family is greater where the Basque speaking environment in which they are inserted is greater. Loss of Basque speakers is steady at 1%, while incorporation of neo-Basque speakers never ceases to grow.

The substantial increase in bilinguals would not be possible without the contribution made by the schools in teaching Euskera to the rising generations. The proportion of Euskalduns is significantly among the younger generation than among the elderly. As a result of the introduction of Basque in the compulsory education system, six out of ten of those aged under 10 are bilingual.

The linguistic change led by the new generation aged under 20 is due to the transmission of Euskera within the bosom of the family but, also due above all, to the contribution made by the educational system to the production of new Basque speakers. The informal education system and the *ikastolas* stemmed the loss of Euskera amongst adults, while among the youngest generation the linguistic models fostered in the course of compulsory schooling are responsible for the existence of one in three Basque speakers. The importance of the linguistic practices of these new neo-Basque speakers<sup>7</sup> is of the greatest significance for the

<sup>5</sup> For an evaluation of its importance see the work of Torrealdai (1977: 470-471).

<sup>6</sup> For more information on this subject, consult Tejerina (2000) the source for the data presented here.

<sup>7</sup> Definitions for the terms used here: Euskaldun or Basque-speaking refers to those persons who understand and speak Basque well, whether or not they can read and write the language. The terms

future of Euskera, since in the coming years they will have to decide whether or not to transmit Euskera as mother tongue to their descendents, both because of its relevance and for the greater growth of the language. The significance of this group of Basque speakers is very great in the case of Araba and Biscay, while quantitatively and qualitatively less so in Guipuzkoa.

The progressive introduction of Euskera into the educational system in general and at the University of the Basque Land has contributed to its presence at the highest levels of scientific and cultural endeavour. The teaching of Euskera to adults has experienced a notable upturn as a result of the collaboration between the movement for recovery of the language, the private organisations and the Administration.

There is a central core strategy on which the possibility of extending the Basque language for the next generations rests: the constant growth of the bilingual teaching models (B) and the Basque speaking population (D), and the reduction of the Spanish teaching model (A), could be interpreted as a firm backing by parents in favour of the well-being of Euskera, of a desire for the linguistic normalisation of the language and, in many cases, for a pragmatic calculation of the exchange value of Euskera on the job market. It would not seem that instrumental, affective or political reasons will mean an immediate change in the progressive substitution of Spanish model (A) by the Euskaldun (D), rather there are numerous indicators to the contrary. If we observe the evolution of such linguistic models over the last two decades, we can state that pressure for bilingualism has gradually shifted from infant and primary education to compulsory secondary and the university, at least in public education. The private sector has shown itself so far to be somewhat less permeable than the public to the process of *euskaldunización* –that is, the change-over to Euskera.

Neo-Basque speakers with incomplete fluency represent the future of Euskera and the ensuring of its intensive recovery and revitalisation. On their response to the social and political pressures vis-à-vis Euskera will depend the immediate progression and transmission of Euskera to future generations, if we take it for granted that native Basque speakers and balanced bilinguals will maintain their fidelity to Basque.

It is in intimate circles that Euskalduns make most frequent use of Basque. As we move out of the family and the circle of friends, the intensity of use of Euskera decreases. The most institutionalised and formal spaces are those which generate greatest resistance to the use of Euskera.

Both if we approach the utilisation of Euskera by means of census information or if we do so by means of questionnaires, the patterns of language use of the Basque speakers varies according to four variables: age, ability and facility in the use of Euskera, the density of Euskera speakers in the family and the demographic density Basque speakers in the environment. Young people speak Euskera less than adults and elderly, tend to use it less where they have less fluency in Basque than in other competing languages –less ability equals less use– Basque is used less in families where fewer than 80% know it and, lastly, there is less communication in Euskera by those that can speak it in geographical areas where less than half the population is bilingual.

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Erdeldun or Spanish-speaking refer to those persons who do not understand or speak Basque. The following categories have also been used: Bascophone, one whose mother tongue is Basque and who understands and speaks it well; outset bilingual, one whose mother tongues are Euskera and Spanish; Partially Spanish-influenced Basque speaker: one whose mother tongue is Basque, or Basque and Spanish, but who speaks Basque with difficulty, or who does not speak it but who understands it well or reads it well; totally Spanish-influenced: one who neither understands nor reads Basque well; neo-Basque speaker / neo-Bascophone; one whose first language was Spanish, or some other language other than Basque; partial neo-Bascophone, one whose mother tongue is a language other than Euskera and who speaks Basque with difficulty or who does not speak the language but understands it or reads it well Spanish-speaker: one whose mother tongue is Spanish or some other language, who does not speak Basque at all nor understand or write it well.

The characteristic features of the process of recuperation of Euskera and the structural conditions of point of departure are the social limits which language policies aimed at the obtaining of a bilingual society come up against. The youngest speakers –neo-Basque speakers in many cases– use less Euskera than adults because while being bilinguals they have greater competence in Spanish. Their distinctively greater ability in Spanish takes them into a linguistic economy which takes them away from Basque in the absence of other personal or collective incentives. Many new Basque speakers have no one to speak to in Euskera at home, given that most family members will be exclusively or mainly Spanish speakers, and where that isn't so, custom and language habits do the rest. What is more, the great majority of the neo-Basque speakers live in geographic areas where Spanish clearly predominates, making it complicated to maintain, or simply find, a Basque-speaking social setting. In any case, competing with Spanish in the environment, when one has previously interiorised the shrunken linguistic frontiers within which Basque operates in a good part of the Basque Autonomous Community, is both difficult and complicated.

Despite these objective and subjective difficulties the future of Euskera seems bright. For the first time in many decades, what becomes of the language depends on the attentions and temptations of the Basque-speaking community and, to an increasing extent, on the neo-Bascophones –the new Basque speakers, a strategic and privileged milieu for language change and deserving of a thorough scientific investigation in the future.

## 5. Market, value, production and consumption of the language

In the two previous sections we have seen some of the consequences arising from three aspects of relationships between economy and language: language as an institution that generates habits, classifications and objectifications of a linguistic nature among speakers, the political economy of the language market structurally linked to economic and political power, and the political economy of the agents who promote a particular type of practice and linguistic exchange between social actors. We will now turn to the analysis of relations between value, market and language, or, to be more exact, the value of the language in the market.

Public intervention -in the form of planning, in linguistic processes- has led to a significant extension of the knowledge and use of Euskera, and a change in the social evaluation of the language. Given that the economic value of a language (that is, a language as an economic resource) comes about as a result of its market positioning,<sup>8</sup> my intention here is to take a closer look at these relations.

A writer who has known, more than most, how to capture and describe the evaluation of objects that is made in consumer societies is Jean Baudrillard. For Baudrillard consumer objects can have:

- a) an use value
- b) an exchange value
- c) a symbolic value
- d) a sign value – social prestige

One thing is use and another very different is use value. The term use refers to the handling of objects, of things, in this case the language and, therefore. Although in this sense all languages are similar, use value depends on other factors such as communicative usefulness, its easiness, scarcity or rarity, its beauty, and so forth. Values, these, which could vary from social context to another, from one group to another, from one point in history to another. In general, the more a language is used, the greater the possibility of

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<sup>8</sup> Although more thought needs to be given to what has happened in historical or geographical terms, the value of a language corresponds, for its inhabitations, to its positioning on the language market. This does not mean that such positioning is the only or exclusive source of its evaluation, but it is fundamental. Given that this positioning is achieved by means of a complex network of practices and evaluations we need to be able to break this down into its component parts. I have already looked at these relations elsewhere (Tejerina, 1992: 55-60). However at this point I only wish to look at value in more detail.

encountering a higher use value, and a more positive evaluation of knowledge or use of that language.<sup>9</sup>

Together with its use value, a language or language variety takes on an exchange value. Such evaluations are based, in part, on the use values and, in part too, on pragmatic, instrumental and utilitarian considerations of a non-linguistic nature which move people to learn or to use a language to attain other ends (enjoyment, culture, employment, etc.). The symbolic value of a language has to do with what we have termed the participatory function of language. It involves a subjective projection of an affective nature such that we attribute a value to the language as a symbol of belonging, of identity, as happens on numerous occasions with the mother tongue or ancestral tongue. These ratings or evaluations are relatively independent, in principle, of use value and exchange value. On occasions, high symbolic value can be attributed to a language which has been lost, or fallen into disuse, but which enjoys a special position for the symbolic value it has.

The sign value, lastly, has to do with the evaluations that are made in terms of social prestige. As Bourdieu puts it "the social uses of the language owe their social value, as such, to the fact that these uses tend to be organised in systems of differences that reproduce, in the symbolic order, the differential separations the system of social differences. To speak is to appropriate for oneself one or other of the expressive styles constituted in and by use – and characterised objectively by its position in a hierarchy of styles that express the hierarchy of the corresponding groups. These styles, classified by and classifying differences, leave their mark in those who avail themselves of them. And spontaneous stylistics, endowed with a practical sense of the equivalences between both orders of differences, express social differences by means of the sets of stylistic indicators" (Bourdieu, 1999: 28).

The term social prestige refers to the two aspects which in reality are closely related: the attitudes held about the language of a group which function as a reference point, and recognition of the social power of the said group. Social power that can vary so much both in historical terms and in different social contexts within a given historical period. Fishman apparently alludes to this when, speaking of prestige, he maintains that "this is not about the mythically invariable prestige of a language or language variety, but rather the highly variable fate or fortunes of their speakers. The triumph of English, Spanish or Portuguese in the New World constitute a triumph of physical powerfulness, economic control and ideological power. None of these factors is in itself linguistic, but the languages that happen to be associated with such forces and powerful developments may entail a series of advantages for their speakers that are much greater than those enjoyed by others who do not speak these languages" (Fishman, 1982: 162).

In our societies the exchange values conditions both the use value and the sign value, and the exchange value is determined in the market of economic exchanges, of which linguistic and cultural exchanges form a part. By that I do not wish to state that the exchange value eliminates the other sources of value, far from it. The question I am addressing is to what extent language can maintain autonomy with respect to decisions made about it, in this case economic ones. That is to say, to what extent the economic field, language as an economic value, is a privileged field for observing the dynamic process of longterm linguistic change.

I'm not sure that we can say that the power of a language as an economic resource depends on the power depends on the economic power and influence of its community of speakers. What is true, however, is that the economic value of a language is determined by the market of language exchanges. This market is not free -it never was- since it is a market subject to intervention. The market comprises language exchanges in which we find values of use, of change, of sign, and of symbolic power, the last-mentioned being the only ones to avoid market evaluation.

One way of evaluating the state of a language in market terms is to consider the number and nature of linguistic exchanges, and thus the language as a resource, vis-à-vis the linguistic exchanges that are realised in other languages in the case of multilingual situations.

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<sup>9</sup> Here, too, we come up against limitations. Compare, for example, the use and value of Mandarin Chinese with those associated with French and English (greater use does not necessarily mean greater use value. In this example the existence of a language market can be clearly seen in which the values of a language have to do with the value of other languages with which they relate, compete or enter into conflict with.



I can think of at least two ambits in which it is possible and important to measure presence: a) language usage at the time of production; b) the products of the linguistico-cultural industry and language usage linked to consumption.

## 6. Intervention and the market for Euskera<sup>10</sup>

### a) language usage at the time of production

In relation to the situation in terms of the use of Euskera we will look at three settings or domains: the family, the immediate community and formal settings.<sup>11</sup>

Frequency of use of Euskera in the intimacy of the family setting ranges between 48% of those that state that they use Basque always or almost always at home, and the 74% that use it to speak to their children. The other situations that interviewees were asked about obtained the following percentages: 48% used Euskera to speak to their grandparents, 51% used it with their spouses or partners, 53% used it with their father, 56% with their mother and 59% with their brothers and sisters. Three out of ten of interviews claimed to communicate with other family members preferably in Spanish.

The use of Basque at the workplace, among friends and close community follows the same patterns as in the case of the family, although at a lower level. The Euskalduns (Basque-speakers) speak Euskera always or almost always with friends in 50% of situations, 45% with workmates or colleagues, 46% with superiors, 48% with trades people and 78% at the market.

Turning to usage in the most frequent spaces or situations such as visits to the bank, to the doctor, or to the local council, here too Basque speakers use Euskera in the majority of cases, with the exception of talking to the doctor. Three out of four Euskalduns speak to the priest in Euskera, one out of two when when they go to the bank or savings bank, 59% when in the town hall local government offices, 85% with their children's teachers and only one in three when they go to a clinic or health centre.

The internal diversity of the Euskalduns in terms of their control of Euskera has a great impact on greater or lesser use in practice of Euskera or Spanish. Bilinguals with greater command of Euskera speak in this language most of the time: nine out of ten times with friends, eight out of ten with trades people, more than nine times out of ten at the market (traditional market hall) and somewhat less, seven out of ten times, at work and with superiors.

When we ask balanced bilinguals about their language usage they report using Euskera somewhat less frequently: 50% with friends, 46% with trades people, 45% at work, 48% with superiors (bosses) 81% at the market. In these cases they make use of Euskera more frequently than they do Spanish. This tendency is reversed in situations in which Spanish-dominant bilinguals participate. Only in the market do they use Euskera more than Spanish, at a rate of 60%, and they speak Spanish with friends in 57% of cases, 63% with trades people, 52% at work and 59% with superiors.

The density of Euskalduns (Euskera speakers) on the ground plays a very important part in the utilisation of the language. In areas where more than 80% speak Euskera, the language used is, according to those interviewed, Euskera. However the frequency descends to the point of being replaced by Spanish, depending on the area. The occurrence of Euskera is the norm in eight out of ten encounters in areas with more than 80% of Euskalduns, dropping to 55% in the areas with 45-80% Basque speakers, 40% in areas with between 20% and 45%

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<sup>10</sup> The information drawn upon for this section comes from a number of interviews with company owners and employers, members of employers' associations, members of cooperatives, connoisseurs of the communication world, and the world of advertising and journalism. Some of the strands of opinions expressed are presented here, without claiming to be completely representative. There needs to be an extension and deepening, in a more systematic way, of the plurality and diversity of the linguistic practices presents both in the worlds of production and consumption.

<sup>11</sup> The data on the use of Euskera are taken from the *II Encuesta Sociolingüística de Euskal Herria 1996* (II Sociological survey of the Basque Country) (Basque Government, 1999). For a more complete treatment of these data, and the explicatory factors informing use, see Tejerina, 2000.

of bilinguals and 15% where there are less than 20% speakers of Euskera. In this last case, those interviewed claimed to use Spanish in six out of ten instances.

The same situation obtains in linguistic exchanges in shops where there is 86% use of Euskera where there is almost social bilingualism to 90% use of Spanish where bilinguals are very thin on the ground. In areas with more than 45% bilinguals Euskera tends to predominate over Spanish when working, in conversations with colleagues and superiors (64% and 59% respectively). In remaining areas, however, Spanish tends to predominate (at 56% and 71% respectively). The only public space where Euskera predominates over Spanish being the market (covered produce market) in areas with more than 20% of bilinguals: 96%, 87% and 67% depending on the areas with more or less density of Basque speakers and a very respectable presence, at 45%, in the areas with less than 20% bilinguals.

Age is the other relevant factor when setting out to explain the extent to which Euskera is utilised. Among those interviewed, speakers over 65 were most likely to use Basque, with those claiming to always or to preferably speak in Basque descending in frequency as one moves down the age range. Those aged between 16 and 24 reported the lowest rates of utilisation among friends (68% did so among those over 65 dropping to 38% among those aged under 24 years), in the shops (58% to 37%), with workmates or colleagues and with superiors, and at the market (86% versus 67%). In general, basing ourselves on the statements made by interviewees, it can be said that in the process of production, Basque does not enjoy the same importance as it now does in other domains such as the school, or public administration (utilities and local government). Only a minority are interested, although this has changed considerably in the last twenty years. While the world of work is the natural continuation, so to speak, of what has been achieved in the schools, the presence of the Euskera in the production process is minimal.

In recent years Basque Language Plans have begun to be introduced at company level, to give the language greater standing and increased presence in the production process; however, Basque is making progress in this respect mainly in terms of oral use. A certain number of projects that have begun to function, such as the EMUN cooperative, belonging to the Mondragón Corporación Cooperativa (MCC), are, hopefully, showing the way for the future.<sup>12</sup>

The process of introduction of Euskera into companies and organisations is not a priority area of concern for the employers' associations, and there is no virtually demand for such services from the employer. At all events there is a great difference in this respect from one geographical area, since in many companies and organisations Euskera is clearly present in the daily activity depending on the extent to which the workers in question may have deep roots in the social environment. As one of those interviewed by us stated, to promote Euskera in the face of globalisation –and the attendant linguistic and cultural homogenisation- could be a form of inserting oneself into that process: "In this increasingly globalised world, loving and promoting what is small is the way to be bigger, to still be there. We know what is happening throughout the world, but we want to be still be there".

#### *b) the products of the linguistico-cultural industry and their consumption*

The constant expansion of production in the language industry as a result of unrelenting growth in the demand has brought about a gradual professionalisation of the tasks (adoption of the tasks by professionals) related to ethno-linguistic activism. Activities having to do with language transmission, and those which arise out of it, demand a permanent investment of time and effort providing preparation for those who work in this area. The latter means production of teaching materials, complementary activities such as theatre, literature, leisure and pastimes, etc. Many of the local civic associations which have begun to appear in recent years publish their own magazines, have their own radio stations and, in some cases, their own television channels. The increasingly qualified and professional nature of such persons is one of the characteristic features of this phenomenon.

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<sup>12</sup> EMUN is a cooperative belonging to MCC set up five years ago, at the time of writing, involving more than 40 workers (around half of them full time), working on the process of *euskaldunización* (change-over to the use of Basque) in the activities of the group of cooperatives in Mondragon. For a more detailed analysis of this group of companies and Euskera, see Amagoia Unanue and Nahia Intxausti: *Cooperativas y euskera. Historia y fundamentos de una nueva etapa*, San Sebastian, Gertu, 2002.

What we have here is a constant increase in the number of people and the volume of resources devoted to the cultural audiovisual production and modernisation of the language, constituting what is in effect a new language industry. Naturally, not all those who are operative in this industry form part of the movement and in the same way not all activists in this cause are inexorably driven to devote themselves professionally to such activities. Relationships are undoubtedly more complex than this, but at the same time it cannot be denied that there are an increasing number of communication channels and exchanges between social mobilisation and the so-called language industry. This makes for a smoother transition to higher level of professionalisation. This above all if we bear in mind that the potential profits here constitute substantial individual and collective incentives reducing possible costs.

Some facts and figures indicating the importance of production in the language that have begun appearing in interviews carried out, are:

- a) Somewhat more than 50% of the output of publishing houses in the Basque Autonomous Community in Euskera. In recent years, more than 1,200 titles per year if we include both new books and republications;
- b) A slow growth in the use of Euskera in the press, with one daily newspaper, *Berria*<sup>13</sup> ["News"], one or two weeklies such as *Zabalik* ["Open"], and a large number of magazines that come out at varying intervals, partly or entirely in Euskera;
- c) An increase in the use of Euskera in the radio networks (free radio, not in commercial radio), and in connection with children's programmes. This in addition to the presence of Euskera in the public radio and television run by the Basque Government;
- d) Increasing presence of Euskera in the dubbing of movies, videos and the audiovisual world in general, including children's games and computer games.

Despite the evident growth in this language market in recent years there is a great lack of knowledge<sup>14</sup> of its nature and requirements, of how to proceed to structure it to give it identity, and to seek to guarantee its sustained presence and continuation in the future.

From a strictly economic point of view, this language industry involves hundreds of jobs, and thousands of cultural products that will come back to Basque society not only in terms of language reproduction, but in investments, taxes and duties contributing to economic reproduction.

Recently a new ambit has come into being, which one author or another has defined as the Web Economy, oriented as it is to the Internet and the digital media. This medium involves two different types of language technology: a) technology which facilitates communication and general transactions; b) that which has a directly linguistic function (relating to comprehension, writing, translation, summary, etc.).<sup>15</sup>

The fundamental components of this field are: morphological dictionaries, thesauri, syntactic dictionaries, encyclopaedic dictionaries, multilingual dictionaries, terminological data banks, desambiguators, spelling correctors, grammar correctors, style correctors, correction of errors in the input, indexers, document summarisers, text-speech/ speech-text converters, translators, operative systems, text processors, assisted translation systems, search

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<sup>13</sup> *Berria* is the daily which replaced *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* ("Egun") [the Paper of the Basque Speakers], suppressed by order of the courts. The symbolic and affective importance of the latter daily newspaper for Euskaldun can be gauged by the events of early 2003. On Thursday 20th February, justice Juan del Olmo of the *Audiencia Nacional* closed down *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* for its alleged association with ETA. Several days later, he ordered the imprisonment of 5 of its executives. On Saturday 22nd February a mass demonstration was held in which tens of thousands of people blocked the centre of the city of Donostia-San Sebastian and main entry roads (EL PAÍS nº 9399 and 9401 of 21st and 23rd February 2003).

<sup>14</sup> In 1996, the *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* newspaper contracted the Siadeco company to carry out a study on the cultural consumption of Euskalduns and Euskera. This constitutes one of the very few attempts to gather data of the cultural market carried out to date (Siadeco, 1996). More recently a good part of the available information has been systematised as the Basque Plan Vasco for Culture carried out by the Council for Culture and Language Planning, of the Basque Government.

<sup>15</sup> For information on language as a factor in economic development in the Basque Country, see the work of Miren Mateo.

engines, ebusiness, education and training at a distance ("open university"), teaching of the language as a foreign language, intelligent agents, editing platforms, terminological assistants, information administer/analysers. In addition to all we have just mentioned there are the activities that derive from or depend on the information: tourism, trade, and also the rights to use a whole range of products (copyright). I will leave the reader to work out what this comprehensive ambit of activities could mean to a language community, especially bearing in mind that not being present in the world of language technologies on the web means not just missing out on a business but "to be forced to pay to use them to sell many of our products"<sup>16</sup> (Millán, 2000/2001). This line of argument can be applied to linguistic products, certainly, but even more so to the non-linguistic ones. We should not lose sight of the fact that this is only just the beginning.

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<sup>16</sup> To broaden this overview of analysis, see 2000/2001. Also in this article, see an economic estimate of what the Web Economy could mean for the Spanish language.

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