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The Dynamics between Unified Basque & Dialects in the Northern Basque Country: A Survey Based on Perceptual Dialectology – Second part

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Abstract

This article presents and analyses the answers to the open-ended questions in a sociolinguistic survey carried out as part of the Academy of the Basque Language's Euskara Eskuz Esku (Basque from Hand to Hand) project. The results and analysis of the answers to the closed questions have already been published (IJLL, 2019, 6-1, 115-125). Some of the main results of this second group of answers are as follows: according to the respondents, Unified Basque is not well known in the North Basque Country, it is mixed with dialects and it poses difficulties for Basque speakers who have not been educated in Basque. However, the main problem is French, the ultra-dominant language in this territory. It influences the Basque language itself. The most widespread prediction among the respondents is that in the future, because they are not widely passed on, the dialects will weaken and Unified Basque will become stronger. Thanks to the answers of these forty respondents, all of whom are prescribers of the Basque language in one way or another, we have a better understanding of the situation and relationships between Unified Basque, the dialects and French in the Northern Basque Country, taking into account the fact that it is a complex and changing linguistic ecosystem.

Keywords: Unified Basque, Basque dialects, Northern Basque Country, Perceptual Dialectology, survey 2nd part (2018)

1. Survey: overall aims, data collection methods & initial results

This paper presents the second set of results from the survey carried out as part of the *Euskara Eskuz Esku* (EEE)¹ project². Forty respondents answered thirteen questions during the first six months of 2018, via a form or a recorded interview.

1.1. Survey's overall aims & perceptual dialectology

The aims of this survey were, amongst other things, to examine the interaction between Unified Basque and the dialects in the Northern Basque Country, the extent to which Unified Basque is recognised, the status of dialects and people's attachment to the dialects, how the respondents saw the future of both Unified Basque and the dialects... In other words, how the respondents in this territory view Basque's language eco-system, taking into account the fact that there is also at least one third participant: the dominant language, French. The first data set with the answers to seven closed questions has already been published (summary cf. 1.3.)³.

In order to study these subjects and create the survey, we applied the principles of perceptual dialectology. Perceptual dialectology studies how non-linguists understand dialectal variation (their own speech, in a local or larger area) and its status (correctness, pleasure, prestige, etc) and which are seen as better. Rather than studying language events, perceptual dialectology studies language awareness.

¹ The Euskara Eskuz Esku project (The Basque Language from Hand to Hand) aims to provide Northern Basque speakers a new linguistic tool to develop Unified Basque, taking into account linguistic variety in the Northern Basque Country. By creating a digital support that will be updated on a daily basis, the objective is to answer questions from Basque-speakers by text on a website, by e-mail, with a direct answer. It will offer recommendations and rules by the Academy of the Basque Language, listed according to linguistic category, highlighting language variety in the Northern Basque Country.

² The EEE project has been 65% co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through the Interreg V-A Spain France Andorra program (POCTEFA 2014-2020). POCTEFA aims to reinforce the economic and social integration of the French-Spanish-Andorran border. Its support is focused on developing economic, social and environmental cross-border activities through joint strategies promoting sustainable territorial development.

³ There were two publications: Coyos 2018, in Basque, & Coyos 2019, in English. The second paper is aimed at those who are not familiar with the Basque language and the Basque Country's sociolinguistic situation.

It assumes that a speaker's language beliefs, feelings and attitudes influence how the speaker uses the language (Cramer 2016). These language beliefs, feelings and attitudes are of great scientific interest in order to assess and understand a language community or languages which interact (Paveau 2008).

Before creating the survey, the concepts we needed to apply had to be clarified, which until then had not been the case. Although the notion of "euskalki" (Basque dialect) is quite clear because it has been studied since the 19th century, there was however no such term as "euskara batua" (Unified Basque) and not only because this form of Basque was quite new. Like all other standardised languages, Unified Basque is a rather complex language phenomenon, both multiple and variable. Unified Basque is not at all monolithic (Coyos 2018). This data is not specific, but rather empirical and with numerous facets. We wanted to understand this through the survey, to get a better grasp of at least the linguistic context of the Northern Basque Country.

1.2. Data collection methods

The survey was carried out with respondents in two ways. On the one hand, using a digital document, respondents filled in a form and returned it via email. The length of answers was unlimited. According to the question, some respondents answered with a single line, whilst others wrote half a page. On the other hand, a one-to-one interview was carried out with eleven respondents and thirteen questions. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Furthermore, some of those who took part in the recordings also answered the written survey.

The freedom of respondents gave a rich and wide-ranging corpus. Sometimes they did not answer all of the questions and some wanted to mention something different, but always contributing something with regard to Unified Basque and the dialects, explaining their own personal experiences, opinions, feelings, beliefs and attitudes.

1.3. Thirteen questions & results of closed questions

In the survey there were thirteen questions, some closed (yes/no) and others open. In this paper we shall explain and analyse the answers to the six open questions. Before doing so, below are the results for answers to the seven closed questions.

95% of respondents think that Unified Basque is necessary in the Northern Basque Country. At the same time, 92.5% believe that the Northern Basque Country's linguistic specificities should be protected. There is no contradiction here, of course. As we shall see below, a speaker's register may include both Unified Basque and the dialects. On the other hand, 80% of respondents think that Unified Basque does not endanger the Northern Basque Country's dialects and over half of respondents said that there is now a form of Unified Basque specific to the Northern Basque Country. It is worth noting that no-one said that Unified Basque is not needed in the Northern Basque Country. For Euskaltzaindia, the Academy of the Basque Language, as well as for other organisations which manage the Basque language and, in general, it is very important to realise this in order to regenerate the Basque language. Of course, in linguistic choices, both when speaking and writing, we should not forget that it is the speaker who makes this choice. It seems that for those who took part in the survey, both types of Basque, both standardised and local varieties, are necessary. However, we shall look in greater detail at the answers to open questions further on (section 3).

2. Profile of respondents

In paragraph 1.1. we said that perceptual dialectology used non-linguists as respondents. I would even go as far to say everyday speakers, although at the same time we were able to see as we studied the situation of Basque in the Northern Basque Country that, in fact, there is no such thing as a common Basque-speaker. Here we did not study the perspective of "common native speakers", ie. those who do not know Unified Basque. Some of these have never even heard of "Unified Basque". The aim of the study was not to collect preconceived ideas, stereotypes or clichés heard about Unified Basque or the dialects in the Northern Basque Country. Sometimes these are spread by non-Basque speakers based on language ideology by schools, the media and opinion leaders. This could, however, be the subject of another study.

The respondents chosen here all use Basque: they teach the Basque language and in Basque, they write in Basque and publish their work in Basque. They are journalists, translators, interpreters or Basque-language technicians with local authorities, etc. We can say that they are "model" prescribers in public life in the Northern Basque Country, and each and every one of them provides their own model. Through their work, they are public Basque-language relays and, also, whether directly or indirectly, like teachers, are prescribers⁴. At work they need to make linguistic choices. What type of Basque to use? A dialect, if they have one, or Unified Basque? Which Unified Basque? Who is the target audience? What is the context? What is the aim of the message in Basque? Etc.

⁴ I would like to thank all those who took part in the survey. Without their contributions this study would never have been possible.

Here is a summary of the socio-demographic profile of the survey's forty respondents. Before answering the questions, respondents were questioned about their personal details.

- **Sex - Age**

The number of male and female respondents was not the same: 14 women / 26 men. Age groups were more equally distributed: 35-49 years old: 4 women / 7 men, 50-64 years old: 7 women / 8 men, ≥ 65 years old: 3 women / 10 men. However, there were no respondents in the 20-34 age group.

- **Place of birth**

Labourd: 11. Lower Navarre: 15. Soule: 6 (these three provinces make up the Northern Basque Country). Southern Basque Country: 5. France: 3. Almost 40% of respondents were born in Lower Navarre.

- **Place of residence**

Labourd: 24. Lower Navarre: 6. Soule: 7. Southern Basque Country: 2. Not known: 1. If we compare this to place of birth, we can see the attractiveness of the Labourd coast, especially the Bayonne-Anglet-Biarritz conurbation.

- **How did you learn Basque?**

Respondents also had to answer this question under personal information. At home: 35 (87.50%, only at home: 26, at school as well: 2, self-taught as well: 7), at Basque school: 1, AEK (Basque night school): 1, AEK and self-taught: 1, self-taught: 1, no answer: 1. Passed on within the family is the most popular answer. We will refer to this important data when evaluating information provided by the survey and trends.

- **Usual occupation – Main occupation**

Teachers (secondary, university, adults): 13 (32.50%) writers: 6, journalists: 6, Basque-language technicians: 6, translators: 4, others (cultural players): 5. There were more teachers represented than any other profession with a third of respondents.

3. *Open questions: presentation of questions & analysis*

As mentioned in the survey's second section, it was aimed at those working in the field of Basque, namely to collect opinions about Unified Basque and the dialects in the Northern Basque Country. Although initial intuition and the working hypothesis was that the dialects had, more or less, survived in these areas, at least inland, and especially in the province of Soule, at the same time the process of standardisation is gaining momentum in Labourd and Lower Navarre. This is mostly the case for the younger generations, namely thanks to education since family transmission is generally rather weak. Furthermore, older native Basque speakers, who learnt the local variety of Basque at home without even knowing what Unified Basque was, are dying out. This is the general trend in the Northern Basque Country: Basque-speakers are increasingly aware of Unified Basque and an increasing number of Basque-speakers are proficient in its use, despite the fact that strictly speaking according to the Academy of the Basque Language's definition, there is not one single standard version.

We shall now turn our attention to the answers to the six open questions: 4., 9., 10., 11., 12. and 13. Answers were quite varied, but nevertheless, without contradictions. There were varying points of view: between native and non-native speakers, as well as amongst native speakers themselves, according to the perspective, the subject being studied and order.

In any case, we shall endeavour to explain these answers, highlighting the main trends. Obviously, the following collection is open to the subjectivity of the paper's author.

3.1. 4. *What are the issues which relate specifically to the Northern Basque Country?*

The way the fourth question was asked is not neutral. It implies that in the Northern Basque Country there is a problem with Unified Basque and the word *issue* is full of connotations. The difficulty lies in the meaning of the word "issue". However, obviously, respondents were able to answer that there was no issue, as was sometimes the case.

- **Aims of the question**

The general aim was to understand how Unified Basque is accepted in the Northern Basque Country through the answers, to what extent and what possible issues there are. The survey's creator (a working group from the Academy of the Basque Language) had to make respondents understand that it was prepared to hear that the role of Unified Basque was not only positive in the Northern Basque Country. Those in favour of standardising, normalising and those against, those in favour of Unified Basque and those against, those in favour of the dialects and those who see the balanced co-existence of two registers in a favourable light were all able to explain their point of view. Collecting language awareness, differing views and value judgments and, therefore, the appearance of major trends is of great use in order to understand how Unified Basque arrived in and survives in the Northern Basque Country.

I shall now present the “issues” identified one by one. Above I described the difficulty in defining “Unified Basque” and I have discussed the word “issue”. I shall summarise in one sentence each issue identified which I shall later explain with several quotes, bearing in mind that this sentence does not satisfactorily summarise the variety of comments. In their comments, respondents sometimes refer to more than one “issue”, often in the same sentence. I have attempted to sort and categorise these. Of the forty respondents four did not answer this question.

- **The issue is French (and Spanish), not Unified Basque.** We shall start with this type of answer: there are no issues related to Unified Basque. Here are some of the comments where this opinion prevailed. One wrote: “An interesting question: you therefore suggest that in the Northern Basque Country there are issues regarding Unified Basque. I see issues with French. I often nevertheless hear criticism of Unified Basque and the dialects. In my opinion, it makes no sense”. Another said: “I don't see any problem with Basque developing thanks to or because of Unified Basque. The problem with Basque is not Unified Basque, but rather French and Spanish. We shouldn't impose obstacles and borders, we already have enough of these.” Another: “I don't see any problems. (...) In the Southern Basque Country there is also a raging debate on this issue. What I see is a tool enabling us to understand each other, both when writing and speaking. It provides us with a common basis. I suppose I'm defending Unified Basque.” This respondent went on to say the following: “Perhaps this question would have been more relevant before because I don't think that now there is a problem anymore with Unified Basque in the Northern Basque Country. Forty or forty-five years ago when Unified Basque was being created certain things were said. “It's Spanish”. “It's not Basque”. You no longer hear these comments. I think it's been accepted. It's fully accepted.”

It is worth noting that these four respondents were not the oldest in the survey.

- **Unified Basque is not from the Northern Basque Country. The problem is that it is distant and the way it is presented.** Here are some of the comments: “Some people still feel that Unified Basque is a bulldozer from the Southern Basque Country. (...) I don't think it was ever explained properly and Unified Basque is seen as something distant.” However, this respondent also said: “Most Basque speakers in the North think that Unified Basque is a form of Basque that “belongs to others” and is “from somewhere else”, meaning they do not see it as their own. For many speakers Unified Basque is Basque from the “Southern Basque Country”, ie. “Spain” and “is the Basque learnt at school”, “the Basque of writers and not their own”. “Unified Basque is also my Basque”, this is what tomorrow's speakers should bear in mind.” This respondent also said Unified Basque was not well presented: “I think the biggest problem is the way Unified Basque was presented. It's presented like a language which is not part of our daily linguistic habits, mostly like something from the Southern Basque Country.” Another along similar lines: “In my view Unified Basque is seen as Basque from the Southern Basque Country. For many people who work with the Basque language, although Unified Basque should be taken into account, Unified Basque lacks credibility amongst the inhabitants of the different parts of the Basque Country.” This respondent from Soule emphasises the distant nature of the language: “Here in Soule we find it a long way from our own dialect.” This respondent says the same: “Unified Basque is a long way from the Basque used in Soule or Biscay.” This respondent said: “For some people it's very distant. Some things are decided without taking into account the specificities of the Northern Basque Country”.

This respondent highlighted the two main preconceived ideas present in Northern Basque society (obviously, the reality of these preconceived ideas need to be scientifically measured): “Sometimes it's seen as the Basque of “Spanish” Basques. Others see it as destroying the dialects”. Another mentioned the negative attitude of some speakers with regard to Unified Basque: “Certain extreme views: some really against, others too rigid perhaps.”

- **Unified Basque is not well-known in the Northern Basque Country, confusion.** Here is another perspective, relevant to the previous one. One respondent said: “People don't have a model, they don't know the Academy of the Basque Language's rules or the *Unified Dictionary*. People see the Academy of the Basque Language as archaic. Here everyone does their own thing.” The respondent detailed: “Problems relating to Unified Basque in the Northern Basque Country are due to the influence of Southern Basque. “Therefore Unified Basque and Southern Basque are lumped together. Another said: “Many people don't know Unified Basque, there are also people who don't know and don't feel the need at all. Things are changing, but very slowly.” And this one said: “I think the biggest problem is the confusion between dialects and Unified Basque: more and more people, with verbs, say something in Labourdin, followed by something in Unified Basque, often because they just don't know the Labourdin form... the same happens with Navarrese and Souletin.” Another along the same lines: “Especially when people are not literate in Basque, they don't follow the rules of Unified Basque very closely, they don't really know them and sometimes they mix them up.” A teacher: “The problems I see with my pupils is that they don't know what is Unified Basque and what isn't. Sometimes they try to use Unified Basque (...) and forget the dialects, thinking they are not Unified Basque. For example, with the word *ene* (my), they will use *nire* thinking *nire* is Unified Basque and not *ene*.”

This respondent, who knows both Unified Basque and the dialect, finds it difficult to know when to use which: “I think that all Basque-speakers are trying to find a balance: “Use Unified Basque, but to what extent? We want to keep some features of our own dialect, but which ones?”. This respondent also has a similar concern: “The context: when to use Unified Basque and when the dialect?”

- **Unified Basque is problematic for those who did not study Basque at school.** One respondent said: “For people who didn’t learn Basque at school, this may be too much to ask, especially regarding the verb. Even those who learnt Basque at school have to make an effort when reading a magazine or a newspaper or listening to the radio, in order to follow the developments of Unified Basque.” Another: “There are more obstacles to communicating between different generations than due to Unified Basque. I don’t think those generations who learnt Basque at school have problems. It’s more difficult for those who naturally speak Basque learnt at home. But this can be overcome by building bridges.” This respondent explains the difference between those who know Unified Basque and those who do not: “The ikastolas (Basque-medium schools) and night-schools are associated with Unified Basque, as well as some experts, but not people in general. The dialects still take priority. Some people really dislike Unified Basque, some others not as much, but they do not use it to speak and even less to write.” This respondent explains two negative consequences of not knowing Unified Basque: “May people in the Northern Basque Country do not understand it (well), especially those who did not learn it at school. Therefore, they do not accept Unified as being their own Basque, they look down on their own variety of Basque.” Another: “Someone who learnt Basque at home and is not literate in Basque (there are many such cases aged 40 and above, inland in Labourd, in Lower Navarre and Soule). They do not know how to use the verb. For example, instead of saying “eginen dizut” (I’ll do it for you), they say “eginen dautzut” because they do not know how they can use “dizut”. They do not know the rules of Unified Basque.” A final comment: “Perhaps some problems with understanding for elderly people who learnt Basque at home. In Soule the problems are more serious since elderly native speakers have only ever heard Basque from Soule”.

- **Unified Basque could weaken the dialects.** This is another widespread preconceived idea in the Northern Basque Country. Respondents did not think this was the case, but mentioned this concern: “There are also some Basque speakers who do not want Unified Basque to be used, arguing it endangered the dialects. This was more present in certain areas, especially Soule.” This respondent explains the lexical issue: “It’s mainly an issue of vocabulary, in my view. It’s clear that the “standardised Unified Basque” used in the Southern Basque Country’s media is made up of words from the central area of Gipuzkoa where most Basque speakers are, there too there may be a specific form of the language - why not? - to the detriment of the varied vocabulary of Northern Basque.” This other one, in addition to the loss of dialects, speaks about the aforementioned mix used in the language of the young: “When speaking especially, it may not be very natural and some local or Northern specificities are lost (ie. many young people especially speak the Basque of Gipuzkoa, despite being from the Northern Basque Country).”

- **The “music” of Unified Basque is different.** One respondent wrote: “Generally, I get the impression (perhaps this is only the case for native speakers) that Northern Basque and Unified Basque are not the same, they do not share the same music. Ours sounds sweet and flows gently. (...) Unified Basque sounds, at least this is what I often think, harsh and metallic.” Two of the survey’s twenty-six respondents mention this point of view. The second respondent said: “The problem is the loss of Basque, when the music is lost and so much fun is made of the elderly. (...) I think some traumas go back further; it’s a trauma to loss that music.”

Generally, taking into account these different comments and opinions, we can say that in the Northern Basque Country there are more difficulties than problems between Unified Basque and the dialects. It is worth remembering that 87.50% of respondents learnt Basque at home and therefore during their childhood spoke a dialect whilst, on the other hand, 95% see the need for Unified Basque in the Northern Basque Country. Nevertheless, these difficulties are slowly disappearing as the knowledge of Unified Basque develops. Obviously, the dialects and local varieties are at risk, they are being passed on less and less, but not necessarily due to Unified Basque, but rather because of the increased presence of French amongst the bilingual language community.

3.2. 9. *In your opinion, what is the most serious type of mistake made in the Northern Basque Country? What is the most common?*

- **Aims of this question**

The aim of this question is to show another aspect of respondents. As we have seen, they were all prescribers (teachers, writers, journalists, translators, Basque language technicians, etc.) and we can say that the aim was for them to say how they view the quality of Basque. This was also of help for the creators and users of the EEE digital resource: to show problems with Basque, doubts, possible “mistakes”, the influence of French, calques, etc.

With this ninth question, potential Basque purists and formalists were able to give their point of view, as well as those who question the concept of “mistakes” and those who do not see mistakes. Generally, the language attitude and sense of respondents could be concluded, bearing in mind they all work with the Basque language.

● **Difficulties associated with this question. What is a mistake?**

The first difficulty is to know what a mistake is⁵. Another difficulty is to know if a mistake is made by those who study Basque, non-native speakers or not, those who use Basque very little or those who speak the language every day. This Basque teacher explained the tendency for adult Basque students to think in and translate from French: “I think students translate from French less from level B upwards. It depends on the student. Some do so for a long time... a very long time.”

Here I shall present one by one the “types of mistake” identified in comments by respondents. Some respondents mentioned more than one “mistake”, some around ten. After identifying them I classified them, stating how many respondents mentioned each one. Two of the forty respondents did not answer the question. Most of the time the respondents did not distinguish “the most serious mistakes” from the “most common”. One wrote: “I am not capable of classifying them.” Another: “How do you measure seriousness?”. And a secondary school Basque teacher said the following: “I wouldn’t say it’s the most serious. But it’s the one which shocks me most and everyday I struggle with the pupils in the classroom. (...) Perhaps they [mistakes made by pupils] will become more common and in twenty years will become the norm and standardised.” (cf. Frei 1929). I shall not list all the mistakes mentioned below, just the main ones. According to this respondent there are numerous mistakes: “The most serious? There are so many!!! Starting with grammar... In in this dire situation, the media - mostly, Basque television and radio - share the greatest responsibility.” This respondent answered the question as follows: “I don’t know. But I often hear them on the radio, and very often, they’re phrases taken directly from French.”

However, for this respondent the issue is not about mistakes: “I don’t know. I’m not at all in favour of a clean and refined Basque. All my family background has always been in French. I don’t know what Basque learnt at home is. I’m a product of Basque education. I’m more interested in seeing people interacting than in mistakes.” One respondent said: “What’s a mistake and what isn’t?” This other respondent criticised the attitude of some Basque speakers rather than answering the question: “Not learning to read and write in Basque; in “important” meetings speaking with Basque speakers in French; not teaching children Basque or not putting them in Basque-medium schools. Always starting in French, including with Basque speakers; always speaking in French whenever a single member of a group does not speak Basque ...”

● **No mistakes**

Some respondents questioned the very notion of mistakes. This is what one wrote: “I don’t really see mistakes in the Basque we use, the only mistake would be not to use Northern Basque at all (Unified), for fear of making (serious) mistakes.” Here is another point of view: “Not everyone sees the same mistake. There’s always someone correcting other people’s mistakes as though they themselves didn’t make any. I’m sorry, but I’m not one of them.” This respondent compared the trend in the Northern and Southern Basque Country: “I don’t think we make any particular mistakes in the Northern Basque Country; except perhaps copying from French. Plus, in the Northern Basque Country we use much less words from French than they do Spanish words in the Southern Basque Country. In the Southern Basque Country, in some places, to understand the Basque from there you need to be able to speak Spanish too.”

However, the majority mention mistakes. A radio presenter said the following when talking about work: “Mistakes. We repeat them and it’s difficult for us to correct them because they’re so engrained today. We’d really have to work hard to get rid of them. They’re mistakes we’re all familiar with. Especially direct translations from French, the passive, *nor-nori-nork*. We do make mistakes.” And this translator mentioned another aspect of language quality in the Northern Basque Country, saying it is problematic: “I wouldn’t answer that [the worst or most common mistakes]. In my opinion, in the Northern Basque Country there are people who are responsible for language affairs, but decisions are taken by just a small number of people, so their outlook is very restricted.”

I shall not comment on potential “mistakes” or these issues. I shall simply categorise and explain respondents’ views. Any examples given are those of respondents. The first form given is incorrect or inappropriate, the second correct or appropriate in their opinion, obviously.

⁵ With regard to this point, those who are able to read French should read the Swiss linguist Henri Frei’s 1929 book *La grammaire des fautes* from cover to cover. The first two sentences say: “One of the first difficulties encountered by grammarians is the distinction between what is correct and what is not. What is meant by a “correct” or “incorrect” language event”, p. 17.

● **Influence of French: direct translations, calques...**

- Translations from French (without detailing which and how): 4 respondents. One wrote: “Mistakes are made because people think in French and then translate into Basque”. Another said: “I wouldn’t say any specific mistakes. I think it’s quite bad that so many Basque texts were thought of in French”.
- Code-switching: 1 respondent, who explains: “Code-switching means starting off in one language, then finishing in another, a major sign of diglossia: starting in Basque and finishing in French or vice versa.”
- Nor-nori-nork (plus nor-nori), forgetting the dative marker *nori* in the verb: 7 respondents.
- Misusing the reflexive and the reciprocal: 2 respondents. E.g. “ikusten naiz” / “ene burua ikusten dut” (I see myself), “ikusiko gira” / “elkar ikusiko dugu” (we’ll see each other).
- Not using the allocutive forms when required: 2 respondents.
- Using the allocutive in a neutral context: 1 respondent (on radio, for example).
- Use of the passive: 2 respondents.
- Using the present to narrate past events: 2 respondents. Invented example: “1849an Etxahun Barkoxek Xahori omenaldi testu bat idazten dio” (In 1849 Etxahun de Barcus wrote a text in homage to Xaho).
- Not using completive phrases with the suffix *-la*: 1 respondent. E.g. “Ikusten dut hor da.” (I see he's here)
- Calques of the French form ‘j’ai’ with *gose* (hungry), *bero* (hot): 2 respondents. Comment: “Gose dut edo bero dut!”
- Using non-conjugated verbs: 3 respondents. NB. overusing “-tea/tzea suffix, instead of -teko/tzeko or -tzera(t)/tera(t).”
- Misusing the demonstrative: 1 respondent. Comment: Misusing the three demonstratives *hau*, *hori*, *hura* without taking into account the degree of proximity.
- Omitting the ergative case *-k* (or misusing): 12 respondents. One respondent referred to this as the sacred “k”. Another wrote: “Mattin erran du” (Mattinek correct), not only by non-native speakers, by some native speakers too.
- Omitting the partitive: 2 respondents. One wrote: “I’d say the most common and everything that comes from French are the worst. I’m not sure, not so much the ergative, I think the partitive is being lost.”
- Not using the instrumental case *-z*: 2 respondents. Comment: “Rather than “Baionari buruz hitzegin du”, “Baionaz hitzegin du” is better (she talked about Bayonne).”
- Using the inessive case (*-n*) instead of the lative case (*-ra*): 5 respondents. E.g. “Baionan joan naiz” (Baionara correct).
- Misusing the inessive case (*-n*): 1 respondent. Comment: “With inessive case, use of the *-an* ending after consonants, instead of *-ean*: *hitzan* is not correct (*hitzean* correct)”.
- Using the definite mark (*-a*) instead of the indefinite: 2 respondents.
- *Bere/haren* (two distinctive possessive forms). 3 respondents. Comment: “*Bere* desagertu zaigu.” (*bere* disappeared)
- Misuse of superlative forms *sobera*, *zinez*, *-egi*: 4 respondents. E.g. “sobera ongi zen” incorrect / “zinez ongi zen” correct (it was very fine), “sobera beroa” incorrect / “beroegei” correct (too hot).
- *Baizik* (only) used without *ez* (no, the mark of negation) = *bakarrik* (only, alone): 4 respondents. E.g. “Hau baizik da”.
- Numbers: thousands without *eta* (and): 4 respondents. Comment: “bi mila hamasei” (two thousand and sixteen), I have always said and heard “bi mila eta (*sic*) hamasei”.
- Making a French word Basque by adding article *-a*: 1 respondent.
- Not knowing whether or not the final *-a* of a word is organic: 3 respondents.
- Word order in sentences: 5 respondents. One respondent: “Ikusi nahi dut” (I want to see) and not “ez *nahi dut ikusi”. Another respondent from the province of Soule: “Putting phrases back to front (not respecting the structure of Basque).” And referring to those who study Basque: “They say it in Basque as though it were French.”
- Mispronouncing single and double vibrating consonants *r* and *rr*: 2 respondents.

● **Influence of the Southern Basque Country (SBC) & Gipuzkera (a southern central dialect)**

- verb root + use of the completed aspect (“participle”): 2 respondents. E.g. in the imperative or subjunctive “atxiki” instead of “atxik”, “hartu” instead of “har”. Comment: “Confusion with participles, mimicking Gipuzkera”.
- *deitu* (to call) nor-nori-nork, instead of nor-nork in the Northern Basque Country: 1 respondent. E.g. “Deituko dizut.”
- Past tense (close and remote): 1 respondent. Comment: “The close and remote past are no longer taken into account. “Duela bi hilabete etorri zen”, “atzo etorri da”: now everything is in the distant past: “atzo etorri zen”.”
- Discourse markers: 1 respondent, who said: “French conjunctions *bon*, *voilà* are used more frequently than Spanish ones in the Southern Basque Country, although the Spanish *bueno* and *claro* can also be heard.”
- lexical borrowing (even if an equivalent in the Northern Basque Country exists): 1 respondent. E.g. *bikain* (perfect), *existitzen* (to exist). It is not a mistake or code switching in my view. It can enrich the lexis of Northern Basque, but can also impoverish it if it fully replaces it.

● **Mixing different varieties of Basque**

1 respondent who wrote: “Before people used to live almost their entire lives where they were born and so that dialect was spoken in a specific area, and developed according to the location and professions. People didn’t move around so much. Nowadays everything is completely different. For example, you could live in St-Jean-Pied-de-Port, work in Bayonne (France) and at weekends go to San Sebastian or Bilbao (Spain). There are “mixtures” of Basque.”

We already saw this in paragraph 3.1. This mixture is not strictly speaking erroneous.

- **Misusing registers**

1 respondent. This is close, although not identical, to the previous confusion. The respondent did not specify which register was involved.

- **Local idioms from the Northern Basque Country (NBC)**

- Using *nor-nork* instead of *nor-nori-nork* (without dative, known as coastal solecism): 4 respondents. One respondent mentioned the verb form “*Ogia ekarri nau*” in the area around Sare, St-Pée-sur-Nivelle and Ascaïn (Labourd), instead of “*Ogia ekarri dit*”. Another example: the verbal form *zaitut* (I have... you) in Sare, instead of *dautzut* (I have... it to you).

- *ukan* (to have)/*izan* (to be): 2 respondents. Comment: “In Labourd, in the area around Saint-Pée-sur-Nivelle, Ascaïn and Sare, the verb *ukan* is hardly ever used and is replaced by *izan*. For some, it is a local specificity to be studied, for me it is a mistake to be corrected.”

3.3. 10. *Where, when and which whom do you use Unified Basque?*

- **Question’s aims**

With the tenth and eleventh questions the aim was to evaluate the use of Unified Basque and the dialect, if the respondent spoke one. Obviously, we must always bear this in mind, when collating such results from the survey’s answers, since answers are given, but not scientifically measured. Nevertheless, as recognised by the principles of perceptual dialectology, they are useful to better understand the reality.

The tenth question was clear and designed so respondents would not experience any problems, as could happen with some of the other questions. The aim was to find out how language professionals used Unified Basque. With forty respondents it was possible to obtain reliable answers, taking into account the fact that four of these (10%) did not learn a dialect at home or during childhood. These respondents only know and use Unified Basque or a form of it.

All the respondents know Unified Basque or one form (or more) of it. Of the 40 respondents 3 did not directly answer the question. Answers were quite short, usually a couple of sentences and sometimes just one word. E.g. Where? “In the Southern Basque Country”. On the other hand, most gave a general answer to the three questions (where, when, with whom) and did not answer each one individually.

- **Variety of answers & Unified Basque of respondents**

Before presenting the answers obtained, below are some of the respondents’ comments to highlight the variety of attitudes. A radio presenter from the Southern Basque Country said: “I use Unified Basque every day. I live in Hendaye on the border and the population of Hendaye is very cosmopolitan. (...) People from the Southern Basque Country say I speak like a Northerner and people here say I speak Gipuzkera dialect.” A Basque-language technician born in Lower Navarre wrote: “I use Unified Basque at work (...), as well as with people from the south of Labourd. I recently moved to San Sebastian, so there too. In general, although I do use some variations (*gira* and not *gara*), I’m tending to increasingly use verb forms from Unified Basque (*dizut* and not *dautzut*, *diot* and not *dakot*.” Another respondent who works in the field of culture: “I don’t think I use Unified Basque, although I’ve worked on my Basque, I still speak a mixture, using whatever comes most naturally. In the public places where I do events in Basque, I try to use a variety close to Unified Basque – perhaps when I go to the Southern Basque Country too and when I speak on Basque media?” A secondary school teacher said: “With almost no-one. Whenever students do written work, I write in Unified Basque. That’s the rule I’ve imposed on myself and I make myself respect this. Sometimes it escapes, but then oops! I correct myself. And we say sorry if we write in Unified Basque: *zaut* no, no, no, I’ll write *zait*, and *daut* no, no, no, *dit*. But then I don’t use it at home or with colleagues. Just in class”. A former secondary school teacher always uses Unified Basque, but an “adapted” version according to the other person: Where? “In most places an adapted form of Unified Basque.” When? “Most of the time an adapted form of Unified Basque.” With whom? “With everyone in an adapted form.” A journalist from Soule: With whom? “In Soule whenever I speak with Basque-speakers from the South, for example... and more than once they didn’t even realise we had our own specific dialect, they thought we all spoke my standard Basque here!... If they met anyone who only speaks Souletin, they’d be very surprised...” A non-native Basque-language technician: “Most of the time with most people. I learnt Basque at the age of 26 and my parents don’t speak Basque. So, I use Unified Basque, even though for some people the dialects “pollute” my Basque (e.g. with Southern Basque-speakers I may say “*zer moduz*” and with people from Lower Navarre “*dautzut*”).”

● Difficulties categorising

I have attempted to present the answers in a table below. Respondents could give more than one answer and several problems appeared when categorising the different answers. Some, for example, wrote they use Unified Basque in the Southern Basque Country with Southern Basque-speakers and that is all. However, they wrote there is a special form of Unified Basque in the Northern Basque Country. Therefore, when answering the tenth question, even if they do not specifically mention it, we can say that here too they sometimes use a form of Unified Basque. However, we were able to identify more than one definition of *Unified Basque*, whether in society, amongst the language community or with people in general. By way of an example, here is what a Basque-language technician who did not directly answer wrote, explaining the type of Unified Basque: “I’m not really sure what type of Basque I speak, in the introduction I said I learnt some of my Basque from my parents (both from Soule), but also teaching myself in a non-standard manner (to a certain extent a mixture of dialects with Unified Basque), with friends from back then speaking different dialects. I’d go as far as saying I use non-standard Unified Basque.” This translator explained the strategy and type of Unified Basque: “Wherever. Whenever. With anyone. I have to admit even when using our dialect, whenever I have a doubt about the least point- especially with uncommon verbs (*ezan + ke*)-, I go into Unified Basque. The only exception: *toka-noka* (allocutive forms) where I feel more comfortable in the Basque of Baigorri than in Unified Basque”. Consequently, this form of Unified Basque is “interspersed” with words from the dialect of Baigorri, at least in part.

This writer said: “Everywhere, with friends, in both the Northern and Southern Basque County, but sometimes I deliberately use Basque learnt at home.” We therefore added this to “Always”, despite this respondent sometimes using the dialect. Another example: A university lecturer interviewed said: “In the Northern Basque Country it depends, but in an academic context there’s no doubt. When I’m on the radio? I’m careful about the vocabulary I use and the way I speak, without a doubt. And in class as well but without affecting my character. I don’t deny where I’m from and in the Southern Basque Country it also depends where.” There are three lines in the table: “In the Southern Basque Country”, “at work” and “at formal events”. Another with people who do not speak a dialect and also mentioning the Southern Basque Country. I have put these in both, despite some of those without a dialect being from the Southern Basque Country.

● Where – When – With whom: results

	how many	% (36 respondents)
Always (= everywhere, with everyone)	5	% 13,88
In the South / With Southern Basques	19	% 52,77
Labourd coast	3	% 8,33
With people who don’t share my dialect	6	% 16,66
With non-natives	4	% 11,11
With those learning Basque	2	% 5,55
With strangers	3	% 8,33
Depending on who speaking to	3	% 8,33
At work	18	% 50
At formal events	5	% 13,88
Reading / in the media	2	% 5,55
At home	1	% 2,77
Never	0	% 0

No answer	4	not taken into account
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Below are some of the conclusions. Unified Basque is most widely mentioned for the Southern Basque Country and with Southern Basque-speakers (52.77%) and at work (50%). The first is not surprising. We know that from the start that this was one of the aims of the creators of Unified Basque: to create a mutually understandable written form of Basque. The second shows that Unified Basque is the respondents' working language or at least the language used at work. If we include those who stated "Always", almost 70% use it at work. We may think there are even more. However, as we shall see, the dialects are only the working language for a minority (except at some local radio stations, e.g. Xiberoko Botza in Soule).

3.4. 11. *Where, when and with whom do you use your dialect?*

● Notes to understand the results

Three of the forty respondents did not directly answer this question or interviewers did not ask them. As stated, 35 respondents (87.50%) learnt Basque at home, therefore a dialect. One wrote he did not know what type of Basque he spoke (cf. 3.3), but used the dialect "at home, school and in general". This respondent answered he always spoke Unified Basque, so this answer was not taken into account.

Two did not speak a dialect and one of these wrote: "I do not speak a dialect, my own form of Basque. However, I always try to make my Basque as close as possible to the people I speak to in Soule, Lekeitio, Oztibarre and St-Pée-sur-Nivelle". Most respondents gave more than one answer. Obviously, it is possible for the respondent to omit the location (where), time (when) or interlocutor (with whom). This is one of the limits and weaknesses of this type of survey.

● Multiple use of dialects

Without needing to be a dialectologist, this radio presenter born in the Southern Basque Country tries to use multiple dialects, both with family and at work: "When I go to my village I use the dialect of my village. With my parents I use another dialect and here at work or when I meet a shopkeeper from Ascain I try to adapt my Basque. (...) We recognise different registers, which we try to memorise (...). Language is what brings people together. (...) We open the door using language. I always try (...). That's why I find the dialects interesting. When I speak in Souletin, I can't always find the word, but I try." A writer: "With my brothers and sisters, with friends from Orègue and people from Amikuze. But I think we can see this dialect in Unified Basque, and I don't have any complexes when using it". This respondent can use two dialects: "(Souletin) with family, children and nephews and nieces, brothers and sisters, in-laws.... and the people I meet from Soule. But I also speak in Labourdin, when the person I'm talking to is from there and I feel he or she doesn't fully understand Unified Basque."

This Biscayan who has lived for a long time in the Northern Basque Country wrote: "With friends from villages in Biscay, as well as those in Gipuzkoa and Alava where Biscayan is spoken, in Unified Biscayan. I used to speak with people from elsewhere in Gipuzkoa in Gipuzkera dialect, but now mostly in Unified Basque. With most people in the Northern Basque Country I also try to speak in Unified Basque." In the table I put this respondent under "Locally", since the dialect in question is from the Southern Basque Country. Another respondent explained how and with whom he uses the allocutive forms: "I use *toka-noka* with my brother in Landibar, as well as with close friends. *Xuka*: with my mother and the rest of my family, and with some friends from Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port or Oztibarre.... *Zuka*, in my dialect: at work, in everyday relations."

● Where – When – With whom: results

	how many	% (34 respondents)
Wherever possible	4	% 11,76
With Northern Basques	2	% 5,88
With native Basque-speakers	7	% 20,58
According to who is speaking	2	% 5,88
Locally	10	% 29,41
In the village (town) / place of birth	8	% 23,52

In the street	2	% 5,88
In the immediate environment, with friends	15	% 44,12
With family / at home / where born	23	% 67,65
With children	6	% 17,65
With brothers & sisters	4	% 11,76
With parents	8	% 23,52
With parents' generation	1	%, 2,95
With the elderly	1	% 2,95
At work / with work colleagues	8	% 23,52
In written work	1	% 2,95
No answer	6	not taken into account

The “Family / at home / where born” category was widely mentioned (67.65 % of respondents). Nevertheless, you can talk in the family home, in the village, with parents, but not at your own home. One respondent, when answering the question with whom, for example, said family and children. Therefore, that category is not clearly defined and the figures have to be carefully taken into account. On the other hand, if we combine “Family / at home / where born”, “With children” (% 17.56), with brothers and sisters (11.76%) and “With parents” (23.52%), in order to make the dialects survive, we can see that the family in the wide sense is a strategic area. A reader may say: “But we already knew that.” True, or better still, “we suspected or thought that.” “This survey provides a further sign. This is what one forty years old respondent said. The next question referring to developing the use of Basque shows this respondent’s own story as a Basque speaker: “With my mother. More in the family home. With family. I’d say it’s connected to relations at specific stages in my life. Orally. Later, I’m ashamed to say that in writing, but I don’t think it’s ever crossed my mind to write to a work colleague or anyone in that dialect. (...) That’s my case. In my case, perhaps when I was young, the dialect. And then, at other times more in Unified Basque. I don’t associate it with the modern world or growing old.”

“In my immediate environment, with friends” (% 44,12) is the second most widely mentioned category. I would say that the dialects are a form of Basque which show familiarity, friendship and calm. The dialects play a role in different registers. We already knew this too, here with this aspect we have another element. And I believe, whatever the case, as time goes by, those who do not master a dialect will also create their own different registers according to their needs and circumstances. Here is what a secondary school teacher wrote in response to question 4: *What are the issues relating to Unified Basque in the Northern Basque Country?* “I’d say not knowing different registers is the biggest obstacle. If higher registers were used in the dialects, there would only remain a small step towards Unified Basque. (...) But young people mostly move in informal environments.”

In the “With children” category, 17.65% may seem little. More precisely, many respondents, although maybe not all, have passed Basque on to their children. This percentage may seem small, but can be included under the heading Basque family transmission “with family / at home”. However, use “with siblings” (11.76%) is very low; but speaking in the dialect with siblings can come under the heading “with family / where born”.

23.52% of respondents are under “At work / with work colleagues”. The dialect is used especially in relations with work colleagues more than just as a working language. This is the type of usage we can see in the Basque local radio stations and the weekly publication *Herria*.

We may conclude from questions 10 and 11 that Ferguson’s classic definition of diglossia (1959) remains valid in the Northern Basque Country. More precisely, two varieties of Basque, Unified Basque and the dialects, are used, at least by some Basque speakers and we have listed these according to functional categories. To simplify, the *high variety* or Unified Basque is used in formal events, in literature, at university, with the administration, at work... and is mostly taught in schools. The dialect or *low variety* is used with family, in the immediate environment, with friends, with non-literate speakers for informal conversation.

But in the case of Basque, without going into too great detail here as we do not have time, we can very quickly see the limits of this definition: the high variety or Unified Basque is used to enable speakers of different dialects to communicate orally on an everyday basis, and it has become the native language for some speakers. These two features of Ferguson's definition of high variety were not foreseen.

3.5. 12. In your opinion, what is the future of Unified Basque and the dialects in the Northern Basque Country?

Here, obviously, no-one knows exactly what will happen, the aim was in my view to collect opinions and feelings, both the most optimistic and the most pessimistic, those in favour of Unified Basque and those in favour of the dialects, etc. Here, once again, there were problems categorising and it was not easy getting all the answers to fit under just one of the categories chosen. One of the respondents wrote: "I can't see there being any future for Basque without Unified Basque and even less for the dialects." If Basque is to survive, I've understood Unified Basque needs to be strengthened and the dialects will weaken. However, my interpretation is debatable.

• Does not know

Here is one of the answers: "I'm not able to answer". Another: "I don't know, I've not got a crystal ball, but I think we need to ensure its future". And another: "Whoever knows is a genius. You can't give an "opinion", but rather "hope". Especially when we don't know what that "future" is. In 50 years Basque will still be alive, both Unified Basque and the dialects. But in 300 years, no idea". I put this respondent under the don't know category, as well as this one: "In my view, the dialects are strong and they will remain as long as the young stay in their villages. People are part of their environment and culture, so once you leave for somewhere else, it will merge with the cultures of other places in my opinion. (...) nobody knows how things will unfold, even we don't know what will impact us and what impact we ourselves will have." This last one wrote: "In writing, I'd say Unified Basque will become dominant. In speaking, I'm not enough of an expert to give a credible hypothesis." I put this under the heading don't know.

• No specific answer about the future

Below are some of the irrelevant comments by respondents, or at least those which I believe to be irrelevant. This respondent did not answer the question: "You need to know both." A Souletin wrote the following: "I think Unified Basque in the beginning is really useful for those who learn Basque. It guarantees a minimum relationship amongst Basque speakers." And this one wrote the following about language quality: "First, I think there was a great loss with the dialects between the generations born between 1910 and 1940... I saw this with my own parents, aunts and uncles... I can see that the Basque spoken by many of my contemporaries is often much poorer, they make worse mistakes that those born between 1910 and 1940 would never have made, full of Unified Basque, completely deforming our dialect out of recognition... So, I see Unified Basque as essential if we want a high-level language in the North." This one also does not give an opinion about the future: "In my view, saving Basque is our challenge, not fighting or debating between the dialects and Unified Basque. Our language is one, with different forms, and our language should be our only concern. Teaching and writing Unified Basque, and supporting the dialects."

• Weakening of the dialects & strengthening of Unified Basque

One respondent wrote: "I really don't know, but it looks highly likely that the dialects will tend to disappear and Unified Basque to consolidate." I put it under this category and not with the don't knows. One interviewee said: "It's a difficult question. I still mistrust Unified Basque. (...) Pupils from the ikastolas (Basque-medium schools), however, are more open than the older generations and for me that means moving more towards Unified Basque. I think in the future Unified Basque will become stronger, but a Unified Basque impregnated with the dialects of the Northern Basque Country." Another interviewee said: "If we pursue the route of French, then the dialects don't have much of a future. They don't have much of a future because if so-called schools normalise the language, all the differences will be ironed out. I think, as Bourdieu said, the dialects will be "distinctive signs" for a particular group or a writer, because if we learn to speak the same way at school in the Northern Basque Country, in 30 years we'll be speaking the same Basque on both sides of the Basque Country." This respondent wrote: "It's not so clear for me, but, as I wrote above, I think the dialects are becoming weaker. So, when we look at Basque, it seems it's Unified Basque that will save the language."

• Survival of the dialects & strengthening of Unified Basque

This is another possibility. One respondent: "In my opinion, the dialects will survive as long as there are Basque-speakers... And the Unified Basque of the Northern Basque Country will spread ..." Another said: "The future of the dialects will undoubtedly be dependent on whether Basque is passed on. If this happens at school, it will be Unified Basque and possibly a weak standard." This respondent mentions the conditions, but without deciding. Nevertheless, I classified the answer under this heading.

• Co-existence

One respondent wrote: “Both have a future, Unified Basque more in formal situations and the dialects/variants (with the allocutive forms *xuka/toka/noka*) mostly in informal situations.” Another: “They both feed off each other, and this will continue to be the case.” This sociolinguist highlighted the conditions for Basque to flourish: “The dialects will continue, if Basque is successful. A midway will be found between modern Unified Basque and each dialect, as occurred with historic Unified Basque. (...) The main issue is Basque’s vigour. If it remains strong, then it will be able to internalise differences, and it will adapt to social changes. The risk is that Basque becomes the language of schooling, later the language of militants and finally that of linguists, as happened with Esperanto.”

● Weakening of the dialects & Unified Basque

Another point of view: “In general, the situation of Basque is worrying. Both that of Unified Basque and that of dialects.” The following answer falls under that category: “In the Northern Basque Country, in general, the situation of Basque is very serious, especially in terms of oral use... All the surveys state and repeat that the number of speakers, especially among the younger generations is increasing... but the spoken language continues to recede!!! This is rather perverse... and I don’t think those in charge of organisations which work with Basque and even less elected politicians really realise this. In this dire situation it is the dialects which have most to lose. I’d like know how many children and young people speak in their local dialect or variety in Labourd and Lower Navarre... Probably very few... Perhaps those whose parents are Basque-speakers or from families where they’ve kept the dialect. The situation of the Souletin dialect is better because the *ikastola* (Basque-medium school) and *Gaü Eskola* (adult night school) teach it...”

● Disappearance of the dialects & strengthening of Unified Basque

One interviewee said: “In my opinion, the dialects will start to disappear gradually. (...) Before people used to live in their village and didn’t move far away. Now lots of people move. People mingle a lot. Plus, there are lots of outsiders who come here. The children go elsewhere to study. So, in my opinion, gradually it will be lost, the specificity of the dialects will be lost over time. However, Unified Basque will survive and become stronger.” This respondent wrote: “I think the dialects will disappear soon, that’s already the case to a large extent, young people today (especially on the coast from what I can see) already speak in Gipuzkera dialect. As if they were speaking “Northern Unified Basque” luckily. The future is no doubt with Unified Basque, the dialects will not recover, because so few children learn them at home, and at home too, today young people who have children don’t speak in the dialects (or speak them very little).”

● Loss of Basque in the Northern Basque Country

For this interviewee the issue at stake is the loss of Basque: “I’m not very hopeful (...) I’m not sure what to say. I’d say that Basque is no longer in danger in the Southern Basque Country and that if Basque survives there, then it has been saved. But, I’m not at all sure in the Northern Basque Country, I couldn’t say. I think the problem is the loss of Basque, and more that of Unified Basque than the dialects. But, well, in any case, this linguistic wealth will be taken on board by the Southern Basque Country.”

● Results of answers

	number	% (34 respondents)
Does not know	5	% 14,70
Strengthen Unified Basque	3	% 8,82
Survival of dialects & strengthening of Unified Basque	2	% 5,88
Weakening of dialects & strengthening of Unified Basque	11	% 32,35
Disappearance of dialects & strengthening of Unified Basque	3	% 8,82
Weakening of the dialects & Unified Basque	4	% 11,76
Disappearance of dialects & Unified Basque	1	%, 2,95
Co-existence	5	% 14,70
No specific answer about the future	5	not used

No answer	1	not used
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“The weakening of the dialects and the strengthening of Unified Basque” is the most popular prediction (32.35%). If we combine this third with the “strengthening of Unified Basque”, there is a majority which foresees a major development: 19 of the 34 respondents (55.88%). In the Northern Basque Country, the presence of Unified Basque will therefore increase and when we add those who think “both will co-exist”, there are 24 respondents (70.58%). On the other hand, the future of the dialects is much more gloomy.

5 think that “both will co-exist” (14.70%). Many of these highlight the necessary conditions which need to be fulfilled in order for this situation to occur. Therefore, it is not blind optimism, transmission will be necessary and the distribution of functions between the two types of Basque.

Only one respondent could imagine “the disappearance of both the dialects and Unified Basque”, ie. the Basque language will disappear or at will least be in great danger in the Northern Basque Country. However, in the Southern Basque Country Basque has been “saved”.

3.6. 13. *Would you like to add anything about Unified Basque or the dialects in the Northern Basque Country?*

This open question gave respondents the chance to say whatever they wished to add and many of them used this opportunity. Seven did not add anything. Below is a selection of some of the remarks made by the 33 respondents, by way of an anthology by this paper’s author. Without comments.

“I think it’s a false war. An ideological debate. Unified Basque, as we understand it today, is just another dialect. If we believe Unified Basque is above the other dialects and we condemn those who speak dialects (do they exist?), then Basque itself will be lost.”

“As I mentioned earlier, Unified Basque and the dialects should not be in opposition. Most Basque-speakers master at least two other languages, Spanish and French. In parallel, in Basque also, I think it’s necessary to know both Unified Basque and the local dialect.”

“The only thing I’d add is that learning the dialects and speaking in them does not in any way harm Unified or standard Basque. It’s well known that they both complement each other... If those who are orthodox like 'Saint-Just' don’t even believe in it themselves... and the opposite!”

“I think it’s both important and possible to keep the specificities of Northern Basque, with some standardisation, in writing, orally and in literature. We could make an effort here, in order to avoid systematically having to borrow expressions from Southern Basque, when these already exist in the North. It’s up to us all to make sure we can understand each other both in the North and South.”

“I’d say Unified Basque is really beautiful when spoken well. On Basque radio there are people who speak Unified Basque really, really well. And a beautiful language is a beautiful language. What’s missing is the gentleness and humility and that closeness. (...) But there are some really good books written in Unified Basque.”

“There’s Unified Basque and Unified Basque. There are the rules set by the Academy of the Basque Language, like the verb and declensions. All literate Basque-speakers should be able to master these. Without going as far as to say that without them, their Basque would be inferior. But I don’t see for everyone else why children from Arberoue should say "egin dut" instead of "eginen dut" (I’ll do it.).

“The *toka* and *noka* allocutive forms, for me, are part of the dialects because that’s how I talk with people from inland. And the same with colleagues here, like from Amikuze. Every week when we speak together we both use *noka* forms. For me it’s not possible in Unified Basque, which I don’t master either and is not at all natural for me. And that’s why they’re being lost, if it’s not spoken in the home.”

“The use of *toka-noka* forms is disappearing in both. I use *toka* with my young sons, but our ikastola (Basque-medium school) is an exception. It’s a shame.”

“Some people are ashamed of their dialect (this is what a 35 years old inhabitant of Sare said: he did not dare use forms like *nauzki*, *gan*, *ga* etc. with children, because they weren’t “correct” enough. When they were younger our father also did well despite many changes occurring in his dialect.) Many people, especially those aged 50-70, are frightened of not speaking Basque well enough despite their Basque being very rich and beautiful...”

“I’m happy to see that in recent years lots of words from “Northern Basque” have been included in the Academy of the Basque Language’s dictionary. Work is needed for people to realise this. For example, many people in the Northern Basque Country use the word “tailer” (workshop, Spanish borrowing), because they are not aware of the fact that “atelier” (French borrowing) is also accepted. This means that work is needed, so that people realise that Unified Basque is not polluted with “Southern” Basque.”

“Personally, I have doubts every single day, especially at work we have to translate and subtitle ... I look at reference dictionaries, but I rarely look at the rules of the Academy of the Basque Language. A “lighter” website with some recommendations for the Northern Basque Country is what’s needed... It’d be really useful, especially when you have to work in a rush.”

“Didn’t you think about carrying out a quantitative measurement to see the extent to which Unified Basque is used? To see how the ikastolas and state schools use Unified Basque and the dialects? If you look at the kabalkadas (stampedes), toberas (farces) and all the cultural productions, plays, and entertainment, the amount of Unified Basque used is zero. Unified Basque is confined to the written word... and it’s also the language of non-native speakers.”

“Unified Basque is necessary, I learnt to read and write in Basque thanks to it and I like it, when I was younger there weren’t so many documents.”

“We all have to do our utmost to speak Basque in the Northern (and also the Southern) Basque Country. It’s really necessary to speak Basque in the towns and villages, to learn Unified Basque to speak everywhere across the Basque Country. And of course, as many people as possible need to work on their Basque, listen to the radio, watch television, read, write and use Basque whenever possible, put children in the ikastolas (Basque-medium schools).”

“Finally, “I have a dream!” (in English in text): that all Basque-speakers and all Basque citizens will one day understand all the dialects, each spoken in their areas with pride and in public life, from Ordiarp (NBC) to Sopelana (SBC) and from Urrugne (NBC) to Tudela (SBC): one single Unified Basque, a Unified Basque Country’s Unified Basque is what I dream of.” That is my final comment.

4. Final word

My long journey through two papers has drawn to an end. The linguistic situation we aimed to study had not been studied in detail with the system consisting of Unified Basque, local varieties of Basque and French. Although the Basque Country’s language eco-system has been commented on in the press and the media in general, apart from the sociolinguistic survey carried out by the Basque Government, it has been subject to little scientific study. Our study is a step in that direction.

Some of the main results of this second group of answers are as follows: according to the respondents, Unified Basque is not well known in the North Basque Country, it is mixed with dialects and it poses difficulties for Basque speakers who have not been educated in Basque. However, the main problem is French, the ultra-dominant language in this territory. It influences the Basque language itself. The most widespread prediction among the respondents is that in the future, because they are not widely passed on, the dialects will weaken and Unified Basque will become stronger.

By collecting the answers of the forty respondents to thirteen questions, we were theoretically able to collect 520 answers. Thanks to these answers, we now better understand the relationship between Unified Basque and the dialects in the Northern Basque Country, highlighting the fact that this linguistic situation is highly complex and changing. Although the answers were based on their language beliefs, feelings and opinions, these forty respondents are prescribers of the Basque language in public life, who at work have to weigh up different language choices. This is why they were chosen to take part in this study. I would sincerely like to thank them all.

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