



EUSKARALDIA I

An analysis of the results

TERRITORY OF THE BASQUE
LANGUAGE

2018-2019



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Edition: 2019

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Euskarabidea – Institute of Basque Language
Basque Autonomous Community
Department of Language Policy and Culture

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Published by: Government of Navarre
Euskarabidea – Institute of Basque Language

Cover and
layout by: Concetta Probanza



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INTRODUCTION

Between 23 November and 3 December 2018 the *Euskaraldia: 11 egun euskaraz* (Eleven days of communicating in Basque) initiative was set up in the seven Basque territories with the aim of promoting the use of Basque. This Initiative set out to create –through the roles of *ahobizi* and *belarriprest* (see next paragraph)– the ideal social conditions for speaking Basque, so that people who can speak Basque and want to could have the opportunity of doing so as often as possible.

To do this, the people with the role of *ahobizi* would have to speak Basque with all the people who understand it, and also speak it in the first contact with strangers. The people with the role of *belarriprest* would have to ask their Basque-speaking interlocutors to speak to them in Basque.

In previous experiences on a smaller scale, it was seen that this kind of initiative managed to promote the use of Basque. The *Irten armairutik!*¹ (*come out of the closet!*) initiative, set up in Lasarte-Oria in 2016, for example, showed that using Basque as much as possible for a limited period of time can lead to a permanent change in language-speaking habits to the benefit of Basque.

Given that the results obtained to date had been positive, it was decided to apply the methodology on a larger scale, and the initiative that encouraged all citizens in the Basque Country to use the Basque language began in 2018. That was how *Euskaraldia: 11 egun euskaraz* came about, laying the basis for what would become one of the largest coordinated sociolinguistic projects ever undertaken in the Basque Country.

¹ For more information, see Jauregi, P. (2017) *Irten armairutik!*

But... would the initiative produce fruit? Would Euskaraldia encourage the use of Basque among citizens and maintain it over time? There was a certain curiosity to see if a social initiative on such a large scale would be able to influence language-speaking habits. So, with the intention of providing an answer to that doubt, *I. Euskaraldia ikerketa proiektua* (I. Euskaraldia Research Project).

Two lines of research were followed in the study: 1) quantitative, to describe the impact of Euskaraldia, and 2) qualitative, to learn people's opinions and points of view on the project. Based on the analysis of both lines, it has been possible to make an overall assessment of Euskaraldia 2018, and thanks to this we have gone into greater detail on the key factors in the processes of change of linguistic habits.

With the aim of achieving the initial objectives, the project has been based on cooperation with a number of institutions and stakeholders. Born on the initiative of *Euskaltzaleen Topagunea* and the Basque Government, it has received support from the Deputy Ministry of Language Policy of the Basque Government, the Territorial Administration (*Diputación Foral*) of Gipuzkoa, the Government of Navarre and Fundación Kutxa. Likewise, *Euskararen Erakunde Publikoa* and *Euskaltzaleen Topagunea* have been on the Monitoring Committee of the project, and the latter has also intervened in the coordination work done at the municipal level.

Precisely, cooperation between citizens and different local associations has been one of the main themes of this project. The enthusiasm shown and the work done by the committees, associations, Basque language promotion groups, municipal councils and people everywhere have been fundamental in order to carry out the research work and obtain meaningful results.

At the request of the Basque Government, *Soziolinguistika Klusterra* undertook the collection and analysis of the results. Under the direction of UPV/EHU professor Dr. Pello Jauregi, *Soziolinguistika Klusterra* carried out the technical analysis of the study and the report with the final results.

This document is the technical summary of that report, and it contains the most significant results of the *Euskaraldia: 11 egun euskaraz* initiative in 2018.





2.

METHODOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS

The research project involved a quantitative analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaires, plus a qualitative analysis based on a series of direct testimonies by the participants.

The quantitative analysis set out to document the linguistic changes that happened to the participants as a result of Euskaraldia, going into detail on the elements that could explain these changes. With this aim, a longitudinal analysis at three different moments in the initiative was made, collecting information on the linguistic habits and behaviours of the participants through three questionnaires sent by email.

1. First questionnaire: before starting Euskaraldia (before 23 November 2018)
2. Second questionnaire: soon after finishing Euskaraldia (after 3 December 2018)
3. Third questionnaire: three months after finishing Euskaraldia (in March 2019)

The universe studied is restricted to people who responded to the three questionnaires. While it is true that those people who only replied to one or two of the three questionnaires also provide valuable information, only the results of people who filled in the three questionnaires allow us to draw valid conclusions on the long-term effects.

This was taken into consideration at the time of sending the questionnaires. The procedure was as follows: 1) the first questionnaire was sent to everyone registered in Euskaraldia; 2) only the people who answered the first questionnaire then received the second, and equally only those who responded to the second questionnaire received the third. Therefore, the scope of the study consists of a cohort based on the (voluntary) willingness of the participants to respond to the successive questionnaires. We are not talking about a cohort chosen previously at random. These are the specific data:

1. First questionnaire: Sent to 225,154 people; 45,563 answers received.
2. Second questionnaire: Sent to 45,563 people; 31,937 answers received.
3. Third questionnaire: Sent to 31,937 people; 18,383 answers received (cohort of the study).

The qualitative analysis set out to explore the social discourses generated around Euskaraldia, collecting testimonies from both *ahobizi* and *belarriprest* participants and from the organisers of the initiative.

To do this, a cohort of the municipalities registered in Euskaraldia was created using four variables: the territory, the linguistic zone², the population density of the cities/towns/villages, and the level of activity of the local organising committees of Euskaraldia. By combining these variables, a list of³ 20 municipalities⁴ was drawn up.

1. Araba/Álava: Vitoria-Gasteiz (Olarizu), Zaldondo.
2. Zuberoa: Irisarri.
3. Biscay: Lekeitio, Bilbao (Deustu), Bilbao (Otxarkoaga), Santurtzi, Amorebieta-Etxano.
4. Gipuzkoa: San Sebastián (Amara Berri), San Sebastián (Egia), Azpeitia, Ikaztegieta, Beasain, Eibar.
5. Labourd: Hendaye.
6. Navarre: Leiza, Baztan, Egüés, Burlata, Altsasu.

To collect the opinions of the participants and inhabitants of these municipalities, «closing sessions» held in each place were organised. These sessions, organized in the municipalities soon after Euskaraldia had ended, consisted of meetings or forums to share experiences and make some final evaluations. In general, the organizers and participating citizens met in differentiated sessions in each municipality. Each group was given a specific questionnaire to obtain their opinions. Overall, testimonies were collected from 453 people.

2. What are the sociolinguistic zones? It is a way of classifying the towns, villages and cities of the Basque Country, taking into account the proportion of people who can speak and understand Basque. Four sociolinguistic zones are identified. The first zone is made up by the municipalities in which less than 20 % of people can speak Basque; in the second, the proportion is between 20 and 50 %; in the third, 50-80 %, and in the fourth, above 80 %.

3. Initially there were 30 municipalities on the list, but for different reasons it was not possible collect information from all of them so the final figure stood at 20 municipalities. As a result, the balance and variety of municipalities initially envisaged could not be maintained in all the variables. The territory variable is the one that comes of worst, as it has not been possible to collect any data for municipalities in Zuberoa.

4. In the case of the capital cities, the neighbourhoods that make them up have been considered as independent units; i.e., they received the same treatment as the towns/villages.





The results obtained were analysed with the help of a computer program for discourse analysis, and thanks to this the evaluations and points of view about Euskara are known and classified.

These pages provide a summary of the most significant results, extracted from both the quantitative and the qualitative analyses.





3.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The most revealing data from the quantitative analysis are presented here, where the influence that Euskaraldia in the change of language-speaking habits is shown.



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3.1. Comparison between the universe of Euskaraldia and the cohort

The cohort from the study is made up of 18,383 people: they all responded of their own will on the questionnaires sent to them before Euskaraldia started, just after the initiative ended and three months later.

Comparing the cohort with the data of all the people registered in Euskaraldia, the following features stand out:

- ▶ The cohort is slightly more female: the proportion of women is 7.8% higher.
- ▶ The cohort is more *ahobizi*: the presence of the *ahobizi* is 11.5% higher.
- ▶ However, both groups are fairly homogeneous in terms of the age variable: the average age of the Euskaraldia universe is 42.2 years, and 40.4 years in the case of the cohort.
- ▶ Finally, both groups are almost identical in terms of distribution by territories.

It could be thought that the cohort has a certain bias; perhaps the people who were motivated to fill in the three questionnaires were more sensitive or more committed to the use of Basque than the others enrolled in Euskaraldia. Unfortunately, this cannot be checked directly, as we do not have the data on the linguistic characteristics of the people enrolled in Euskaraldia.

It is possible, however, to establish some points of comparison between the people who only answered the first questionnaire (45,563) and those who responded to the three questionnaires (18,383). From this comparison, we conclude that there are hardly any differences between the groups in terms of language skills (comprehension and oral expression) and the importance given to the use of Basque (just a small difference of between 0.6 and 1.5 points). As for the use of Basque before Euskaraldia started, there is also a great similarity between the two groups (only a slight difference of between 3.6 and 6 points).

In the light of the data, it could be said that the cohort has some sociological and linguistic biases and that, therefore, it does not fully represent the universe of Euskaraldia. In any case, any bias that may be present is minor, so it can be concluded that it represents the universe of Euskaraldia quite well and can provide enough significant information on this universe.⁵



3.2. Snapshot of the current situation

Before dealing with the changes that Euskaraldia has brought about in the linguistic behaviour of the participants in the study, it is necessary to show some of its socio-linguistic characteristics at the beginning of the intervention. This initial snapshot can serve as the main reference to evaluate, at a later stage, the changes brought about during and after Euskaraldia.

3.2.1. General aspects:

Briefly, these are the main characteristics of the participants in the study:

5. All the categories analysed in this research study fulfil the condition of consisting of at least 200 people. Furthermore, the differences between the data are significant: $p < 0.05$ when applying Bonferroni's Test. According to Cohen's d , differences are considered small when they are close to 5 points, average at 10 points and large around 20 points.



- As regards territory, most (85%) are from the Autonomous Community of Euskadi.

Table 1: **Distribution of the cohort per territory**

Araba/Álava	Biscay	Gipuzkoa	Northern Basque Country	Navarre
9,3	31,9%	44,6%	1,7%	12,6%

- The majority of participants (82.3%) are located in the intermediate sociolinguistic zones, i.e., zone 2 and zone 3.

Table 2: **Distribution of the cohort per sociolinguistic zone**

Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
9,5%	41%	41,3%	8,2%

- As for gender, the presence of females is greater (70%).

Table 3: **Distribution of the cohort per gender**

Women	Men	Non-binary
70%	29,1%	0,9%



- The age group between 35 and 49 years of age is the biggest (43.5%).

Table 4: **Distribution of the cohort per age group**

16-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	Over 65
14,1%	17,4%	43,5%	22,6%	2,4%

- As regards the role, the majority of participants were *ahobizi* (84.3%).

Table 5: **Distribution of the cohort per role**

Ahobizi	Belarriprest
84,3%	15,7%

3.2.2. Linguistic aspects:

- People with good language skills participated in the study: 9 out of 10 people in the cohort understand Basque well (91.2%), and 8 out of 10 speak it correctly (84.8%).



- D The majority who responded to the questionnaires show an interest in the use of Basque. Valuing the importance of speaking Basque, 9 out of 10 responded that, for them, it was «very» important or of the «highest» importance («highest» 47.1%; «very» 46.6%).
- D Most of the people who responded to the three questionnaires know, from their own experience, what is involved in changing linguistic habits. More than half (65.3%) had changed their linguistic habits (going from speaking to someone in Spanish or French to speaking Basque) even before Euskaraldia, at least with a few other people (between one and five persons). 18.7% of the participants said they had this experience with a lot of people (more than 6 persons). Some have never changed their linguistic habit, regardless of the interlocutor(s) (15.9%).
- D The majority speak Basque to friends and acquaintances when the latter understand Basque. Even before Euskaraldia, 36.2% of the participants in the study used Basque regularly, i.e. they speak Basque «to all or almost all» of their usual interlocutors who understand it. In these cases, the optimization of the use of Basque is total, as they speak it on practically all the occasions in which the conditions are right to do so. Furthermore, 30.3% of the participants, despite not having such a firm or constant attitude, show a clear tendency to speak Basque to their usual interlocutors who understand it (they claim to speak Basque «to the majority»).
- D One thing is the extent to which Basque is optimized (speaking Basque when the conditions for doing so are right), and another is the place the relations in Basque occupy in the everyday relationships of each person. Regarding this last point, half of the participants say that they ‘live’ in Basque totally or to a great extent: 27.4% of the participants in the study say that «all or almost all» their day-to-day relations are in Basque, and 29.4% say that «more than half» of what they speak is in Basque.

3.2.3. Special categories:

After cross-referencing the variable «role in Euskaraldia» and «ability to speak Basque», four categories are created (see the proportion of each category in Table 6):

1. *Euskaldun⁶ ahobizi*: Able to understand and speak Basque well, and participated in the role of *ahobizi*

6. In the text the term «euskaldun» is used as a synonym for ‘Basque speaker’.



- 2. *Passive euskaldun*⁷ *ahobizi*: Able to understand Basque but has difficulty speaking it, and participated in the role of *ahobizi*
- 3. *Euskaldun belarriprest*: Able to understand and speak Basque well, and has participated with the role of *belarriprest*
- 4. *Passive euskaldun belarriprest*: Someone able to understand Basque but speaks it with difficulty, and participated in the role of *belarriprest*

Table 6: **Distribution of the cohort according to language skills and the role of the members**

	AHOBIZI	BELARRIPREST
EUSKALDUN (Basque speaker)	94,9%	30,8 %
PASSIVE EUSKALDUN (Passive Basque speaker)	5,1%	69,2%
	100%	100 %



The participants who speak Basque well (called *euskaldunes* –Basque speakers– in the text) showed a clear tendency to opt for the role of *ahobizi*. In contrast, those who have certain difficulties or limits to express themselves in Basque (called *passive euskalduns* –passive Basque speakers– in the text) went for the role of *belarriprest*. In any event, there were a few significant groups that broke this trend. Some Basque speakers were part of the *belarriprest* group (30.8% of all the *belarriprest*), and a few passive Basque speakers opted for the role of *ahobizi* (5.1% of all the *ahobizi*).

3.3. Evolution of linguistic behaviour

This section explains how the linguistic behaviour of the participants changed in the 11 days that Euskaraldia lasted. To do this, the first questionnaire (made before starting Euskaraldia) and the second (made just after Euskaraldia finished) were compared. The result of this comparison has been called «Difference 1», and it reflects the evolu-

7. In the text the term «passive euskaldun» is used as a synonym for ‘passive Basque speaker’.

tion of the linguistic behaviours that took place between the first and second questionnaire. An analysis was also made of what happened to linguistic behaviours in the longer term. To do this, the linguistic attitude of the participants before starting Euskaraldia was compared with that shown three months after finishing it; the result of this comparison has been called «Difference 2».

Technical remark:

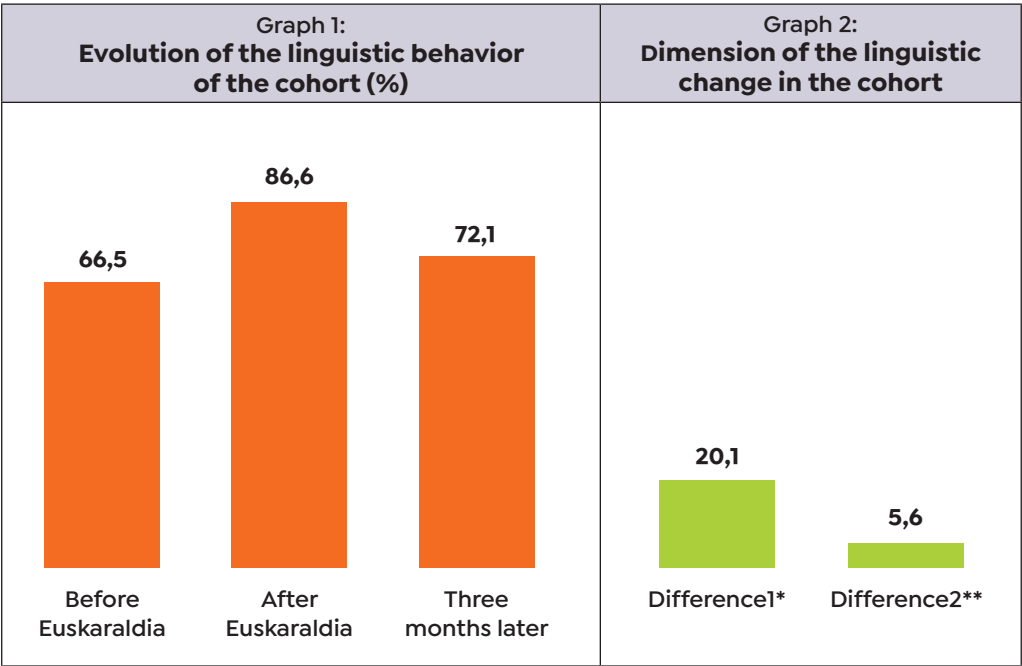
The following procedure was followed to measure linguistic behaviour. In the three questionnaires the same question was asked of the participants: “Among your close interlocutors, to how many of them who understand Basque do you speak in Basque?” Among the possible responses to this question, the number of persons who responded: “to all or almost all” or “to the majority”. This figure shows how many people tend to speak Basque when the interlocutor also understands it. The same process was repeated in the three questionnaires, and the results are compared to analyse the evolution of linguistic behaviour.

3.3.1. General trend

Taking the whole cohort into consideration, it can be seen that, at the time of starting Euskaraldia, two-thirds of the participants (66.5%) were already used to speaking Basque with people they knew who understood it.

Eleven days into Euskaraldia a big change took place, and the percentage of people who speak Basque «to the majority» or «to all» of people they know who understand it rose considerably (20+ %).

Three months after the end of Euskaraldia a reversal took place in the linguistic behaviour shown during the 11 days of Euskaraldia, although it is not pronounced enough so as to lose everything gained in that period. In the final calculation, there is an increase of 5.6 points in the use of Basque compared with the situation prior to Euskaraldia. The last measurement indicates a use of Basque around 72.1%.



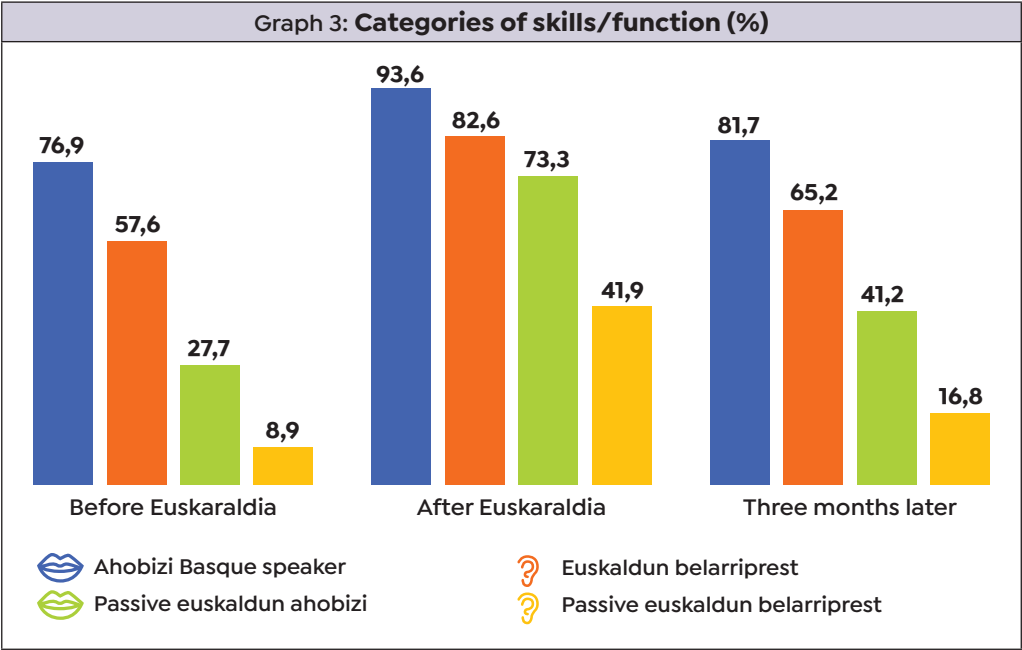
***Difference1:** Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia after eleven days.
****Difference2:** Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia three months later.

As can be seen, Euskaraldia has meant a major boost to the modification of language-speaking habits during the 11 days of the intervention (an increase of 20%). It is known that new linguistic behaviours require time and repetition to be internalized. Nevertheless, the intervention of Euskaraldia was not over a long period (11 days). We can venture the hypothesis that this short period has been insufficient to consolidate the new linguistic behaviours⁸ in many cases. However, in some relations this period has been sufficient to establish new linguistic behaviours: three months later an increase of 5.6% in the use of Basque was still reflected.

8. In other documented experiences that use a similar methodology similar, the intervention periods have been considerably longer than those in Euskaraldia. For example, in the Eusle methodology used in work centres (of the main sources of the methodology of Euskaraldia) the interventions to bring about the change in linguistic habits last for two months. The same thing happened in the *Irten armairutik!* initiative carried out in the municipality of Lasarte-Oria (this is also a direct forerunner of Euskaraldia), where the exercise lasted 40 days. For more information on the Eusle methodology, see: Jauregi, P., Suberbiola, P., (2017) *Aldahitz ikerketa, eusle metodologia esperientzien emaitzak 2013-2016* or <http://www.soziolinguistika.eus/aldahitz>

3.3.2. Evolution per category

By combining the *ahobizi* and *belarriprest* functions with the language skills of the participants, the four above mentioned categories are obtained (*euskaldun ahobizi* [Ahobizi Basque speaker], *passive euskaldun ahobizi* [Ahobizi passive Basque speaker], *euskaldun belarriprest* [Belarriprest Basque speaker] and *passive euskaldun belarriprest* [Belarriprest passive Basque speaker]). Graph 3 shows the evolution in the use of Basque for each of these categories. (See section 2.3.2. above for definitions).



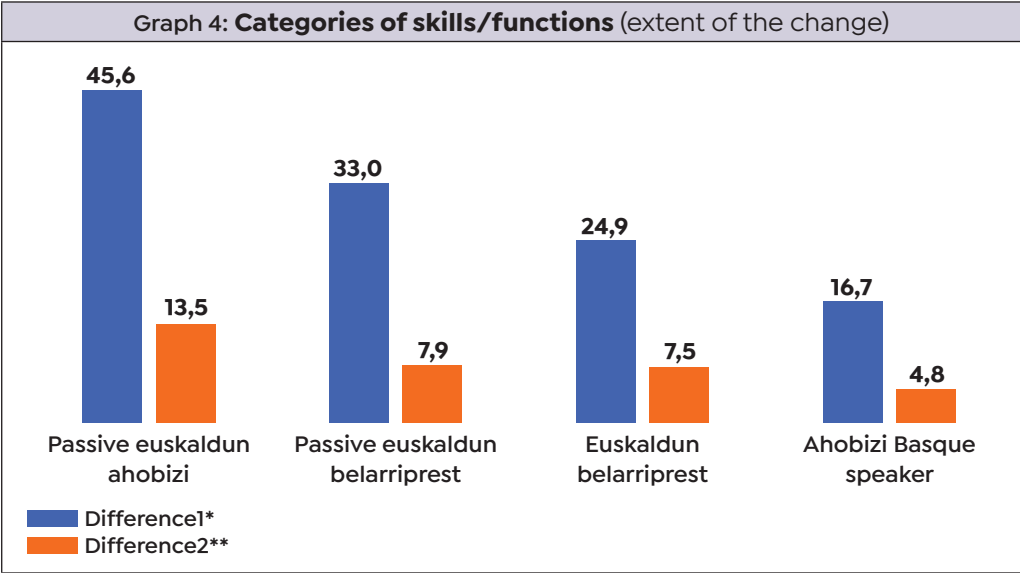
The members of the *euskaldun ahobizi* category have experienced less changes in the use of Basque, both during Euskaraldia (16.7-point improvement) and when it comes to maintaining the change three months later (4.8-point improvement). These changes are, however, very significant. It should be considered that many people in that category (76.9%) already had a clear tendency to speak Basque, even before Euskaraldia, and therefore the proportion of people in a position to improve their linguistic behaviour was very small. In such a situation, an increase in the use of Basque of 16.7 points and 4.8 points respectively is very important from a proportional point of view.



Furthermore, the people who most clearly improved their use of Basque were those who, even having certain difficulties in speaking Basque, opted for the role of *ahobizi* (i.e. the members of the *Passive euskaldun ahobizi* category). Before Euskaraldia started, only 27.7% of the people in this category spoke Basque regularly: quite a low starting point. During Euskaraldia this proportion rose to 73.3%, i.e. 45.6 points more in comparison with the starting situation.

In the light of the data, it could be thought that Euskaraldia has encouraged people sufficiently and has given them the necessary support so that they, despite the language difficulties, could sustain a high use of Basque. Three months after Euskaraldia ended, a decline in the use of Basque was perceived, although not so big as to return to the starting point. In fact, a comparison of the final situation in relation to the initial one gives a positive balance of 13.5 points.

Regarding the two categories related to the role of *belarriprest*, the analysis can begin with the *Passive euskaldun belarriprest* category, the one with the most people. Before Euskaraldia started, the members of this category showed a very low proportion in the use of Basque: only 8.9% had the habit of speaking Basque with people they knew who understood Basque. During Euskaraldia, the members of this category improved by 33 points in their use of Basque, despite the fact that their status of *belarriprest* did not include an explicit commitment regarding the use of Basque. In the measurement three months after Euskaraldia, the improvement in the use of Basque was 7.9 points, a notable change.



*Difference1: Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia after eleven days.
**Difference2: Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia three months later.

The evolution of the linguistic behaviour of the *euskaldun belarriprest* category is equally interesting. Before Euskaraldia started, half of the members in this category spoke Basque regularly (57.6%). However, this proportion grew by 24.9 points throughout Euskaraldia, and three months later an increase of 7.5 points has been maintained.

The data confirm that the influence of Euskaraldia helped to improve the use of Basque, both among the people who participated as *ahobizi* and those who were *belarriprest*⁹. It can be seen that the role of *belarriprest* does not have to be restricted to *passive euskalduns*, nor that the role of *ahobizi* needs to be automatically related to the *euskalduns*. In fact, the *euskalduns* who participated in the role of *belarriprest* notably improved their use of Basque, as have the *passive euskalduns* who participated in the role of *ahobizi*. Indeed, the richness of both roles goes beyond mere language skills, it is closely related to certain attitudes and behaviours.

The general dynamic of Euskaraldia has created collective and large-scale conditions to facilitate communication in Basque, and within this general dynamic, both the *ahobizi* and the *belarriprest* have been able to improve their use of Basque. In the light of the data, the need to strengthen the role of *belarriprest* can be suggested. The figure and the role of *belarriprest* provide an opportunity to attract large sectors of society to Euskaraldia that are rather distant from the social dynamics that foster the use of Basque. Increasing the participation of people in the role of *belarriprest* would be an interesting option for the dissemination of Euskaraldia.

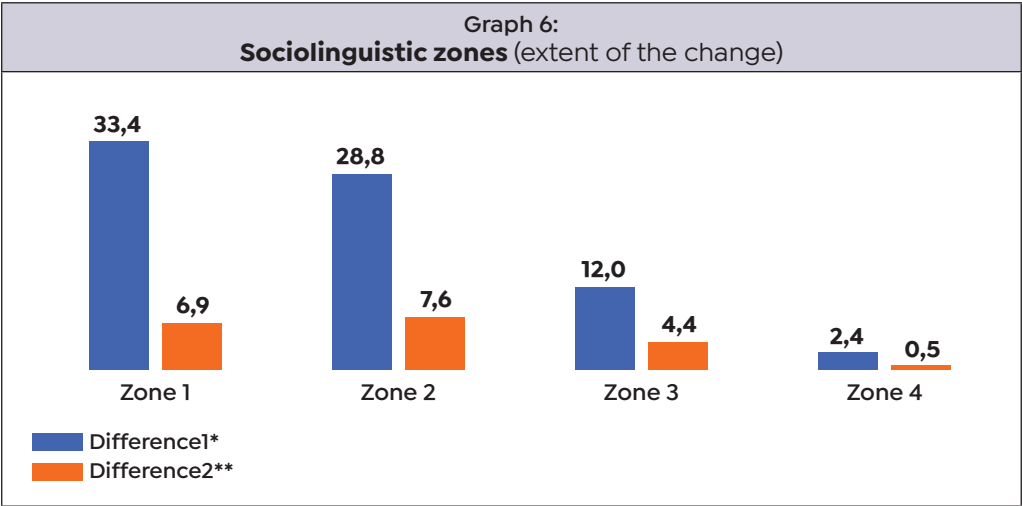
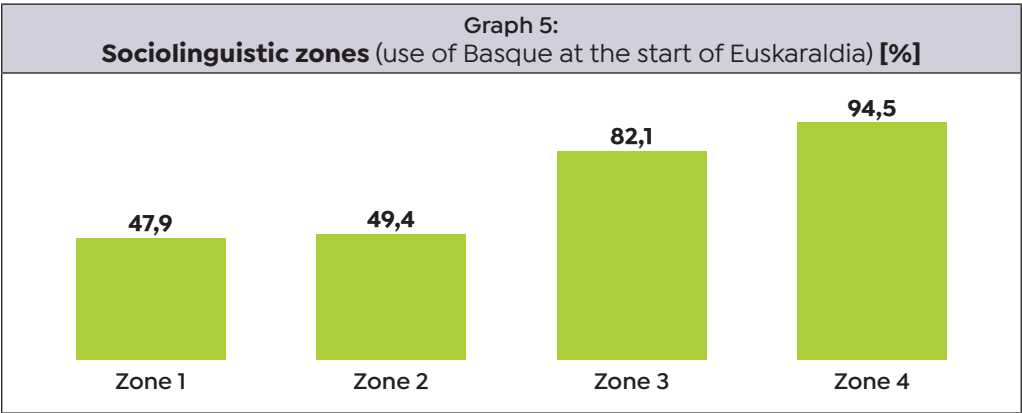


3.3.3. Evolution per sociolinguistic zone

When Euskaraldia started, the biggest group (94.5%) of those who spoke Basque regularly was in zone 4¹⁰, i.e., in the linguistic zone with the highest density of Basque speakers. It is easy to understand that this zone is where the use of Basque as a result of Euskaraldia has increased less: 2.4 points in 11 days, and 0.5 points three months later. These figures are not surprising. Indeed, the margin for improvement in the use of Basque of the participants in this sociolinguistic zone was almost non-existent, around 5.5 points.

9. The data also suggest that the change in linguistic behaviour that has taken place in the entire universe of Euskaraldia has perhaps been greater than the one shown by the data. An analysis of the cohort reveals that the linguistic evolution of the *belarriprest* has been greater (*Difference*¹: 30.5 points, *Difference*²: 7.8 points) than that of the *ahobizi* (*Difference*¹: 18.2 points, *Difference*²: 5.2 points). However, as the *ahobizi* have a higher representation in the cohort than they had in Euskaraldia (+11.5 points), that bias strengthens the weight of the tendencies of the *ahobizi* in the general data.

10. Municipalities with a density of *euskalduns* above 80%.



***Difference1:** Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia after eleven days.
****Difference2:** Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia three months later.

The evolution of zone 3¹¹ is similar to that of zone 4. In other words, before Euskaraldia began the level of use of Basque was high, with only slight changes taking place throughout the process.

Zone 1¹² was where the biggest changes took place throughout Euskaraldia (33.4 points), and three months later a significant increase is still being maintained (6.9

11. Municipalities with a density of euskalduns between 50 % and 80 %.
12. Municipalities with a density of euskalduns lower than 20 %.

points). This big increase is related to the initial level of the use of Basque. In the initial measurement, only 47.9% of the participants in zone 1 said they spoke Basque with their closest Basque-speaking interlocutors, and therefore they had a large margin to change their linguistic behaviour.

The evolution recorded in zone 2¹³ is similar to that of zone 1. In the initial measurement, the level of use of Basque was average, which meant a clear margin for improvement and change in linguistic behaviour. The data show a major change during the 11 days of Euskaraldia (improvement of 28.8 points), and a significant accumulated change three months after the intervention period ended (improvement of 7.6 points).

it is interesting to compare the evolution of zones 2 and 3, i.e. zones where most of the people in the cohort live (82.3%). The basic point is that, during the intervention of Euskaraldia, the increase in the use of Basque was greater in zone 2 than in zone 3. However, the consolidation of the change was proportionally greater in 3 than in zone 2 three months later after the intervention was over. The explanation for this evolution may lie in the compact nature of these linguistic zones¹⁴. In the zones where the density of euskalduns is higher (zone 3, for example), the changes in language-speaking habits can enter the Basque-speaking social network more easily and, therefore, it is more likely that the changes will last over time. In contrast, in the zones of lower density of euskalduns (zone 2, for example), the likely lower linguistic ‘compacting’ of the social networks¹⁵ reduces the ability to incorporate the changes on a permanent basis.



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3.3.4. Evolution per territory

In an analysis by territory, two trends are observed (see Graph 8). On one hand, a tendency located in Araba/Álava, Biscay and Navarre and on the other, one represented by Gipuzkoa and the Northern Basque Country¹⁶.

13. Municipalities with a density of euskalduns between 20% and 50%.

14. By ‘compacting’ we understand the social spaces in which all the members at least understand Basque, which therefore allows a continuous and uninterrupted use of the language by the people who wish to speak it.

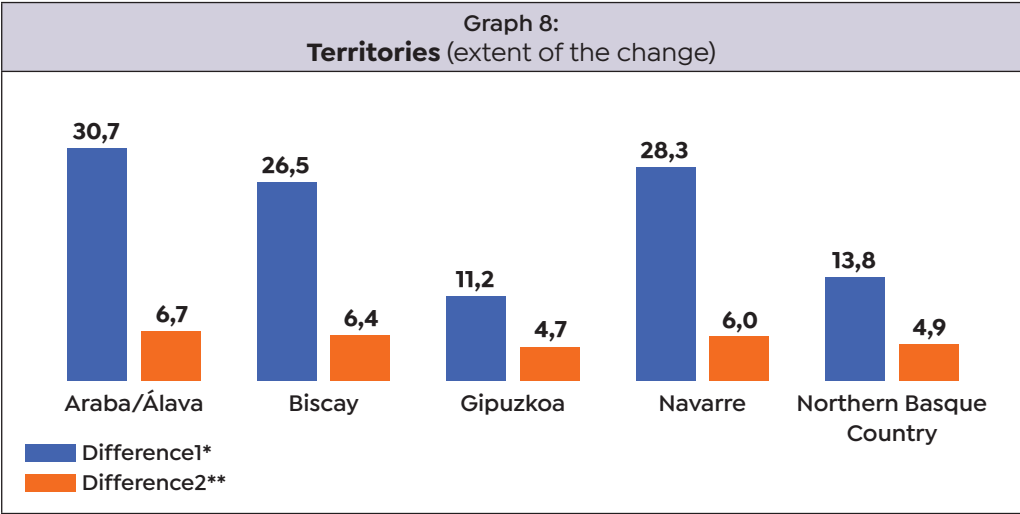
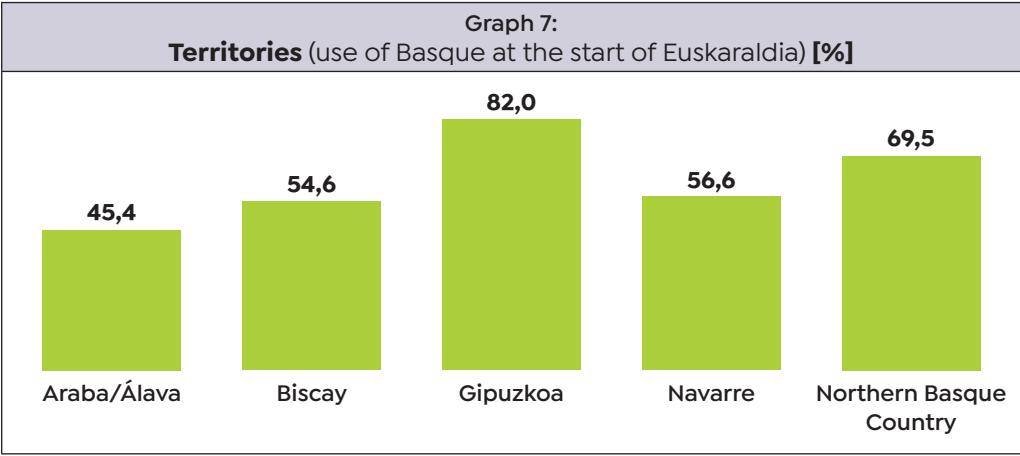
15. This is the result of the common presence in the social networks of people who do not understand Basque, preventing the functional use of the language as the *lingua franca* in all relations.

16. The three territories that make up the Northern Basque Country come together in a single category, to comply with the previously established condition for analysis (n >200). In any event, even the sum of the participants in the territories of Labourd, Lower Navarre and Zuberoa produces a low



The linguistic evolution in the territories of Araba/Álava, Biscay and Navarre is identical, and they reproduce the evolution pattern observed in sociolinguistic zones 1 and 2.

For its part, the case of Gipuzkoa clearly shows a similar pattern to that of sociolinguistic zone 3. This is also the case of the Northern Basque Country, although the small number in the category leads us to make a more cautious reading.



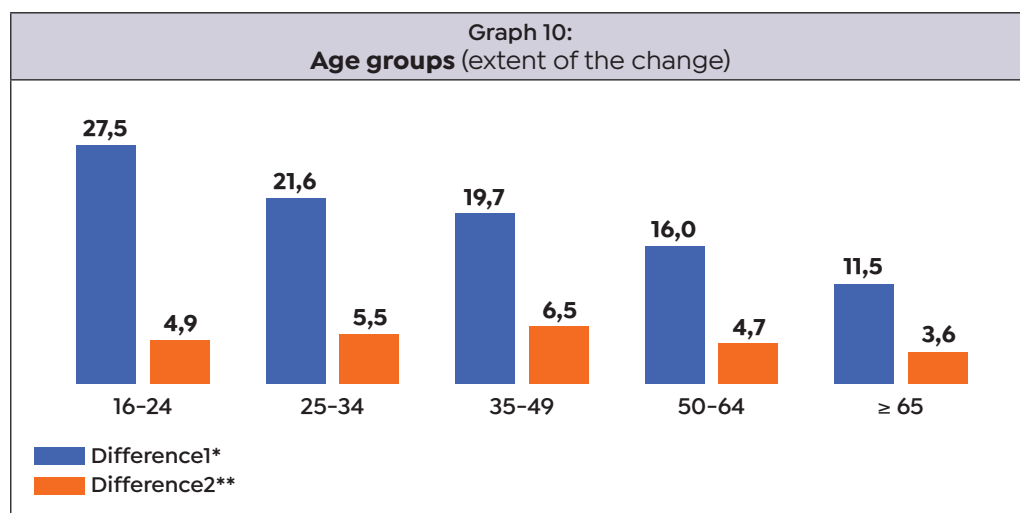
***Difference1**: Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia after eleven days.
****Difference2**: Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia three months later.

result (305 people) and only represents 1.7% of the total. Therefore, these data should be interpreted with great caution.

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Graph 9:
Age groups (use of Basque at the start of Euskaraldia) [%]

Age group	Percentage [%]
16-24	59,3
25-34	65,2
35-49	66,2
50-64	71,4
≥ 65	76,6



****Difference2:** Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia three months later.

A similar change was recorded in all the age groups three months later (between 3.6 and 6.5 points). This means, among other things, that the younger the population,

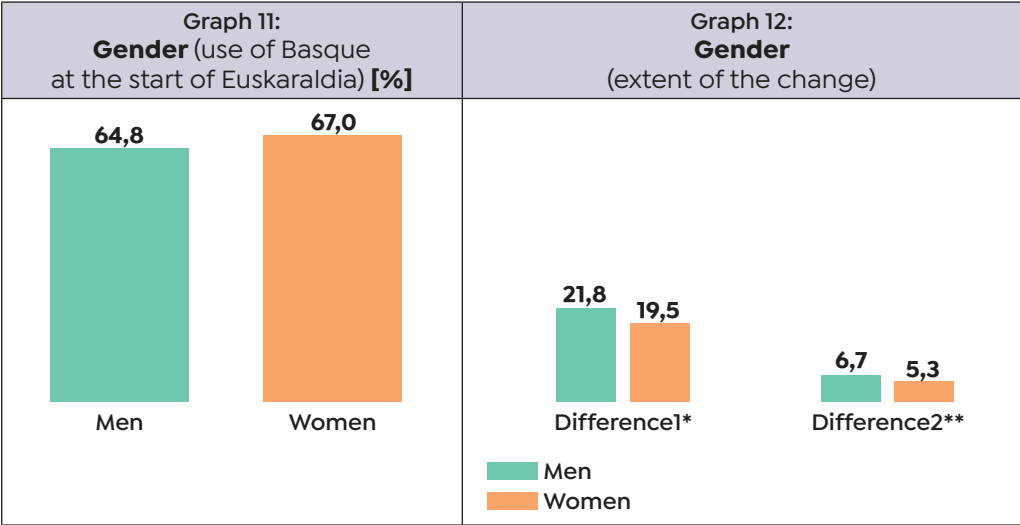


more ups and downs were observed in the linguistic evolution. That is, the linguistic behaviour of young people underwent more changes during Euskaraldia, although there was also a greater decline after finishing the intervention.

As a hypothesis, it could be said that the major changes in linguistic behaviour require (among other things) a longer intervention or a wider-ranging exercise to ensure that the results are consolidated over time. The young people were able to change their linguistic habits and try a new behaviour during the 11 days of Euskaraldia, but they have not had enough time to consolidate this behaviour.

3.3.6. Evolution per gender

If we take gender into account, it can be seen that the dimension and proportion of the change are very similar between men and women¹⁷. As regards the habit of speaking Basque before Euskaraldia started, both men and women show similar figures (see Graph 11). 67% de women say they speak Basque with their closest interlocutors who understand it, and 64.8 % of men say the same.



*Difference1: Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia after eleven days.
**Difference2: Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia three months later.

17. The category of non-binary has not been analysed, because it does not fulfil the condition of having a minimum of 200 participants.

Throughout Euskaraldia, the men increased their use of Basque by 21.8 points, while the women recorded a figure of 19.5 points (see Graph 12). The change maintained three months later is similar in both cases: an increase of 6.7 points in the case of the men, and 5.3 points for the women.

The impact of the gender variable was evident in the participation in Euskaraldia (a proportion of 6/4 in favour of women), as well as when responding to the questionnaires (a proportion of 7/3 in favour of women). However, once within the context of Euskaraldia, it does not seem that the gender variable has marked out differences in terms of the linguistic behaviour of men and women (at least regarding the level of use of Basque referred to in this study)¹⁸.

3.4. The presence of Basque in the everyday life of each individual

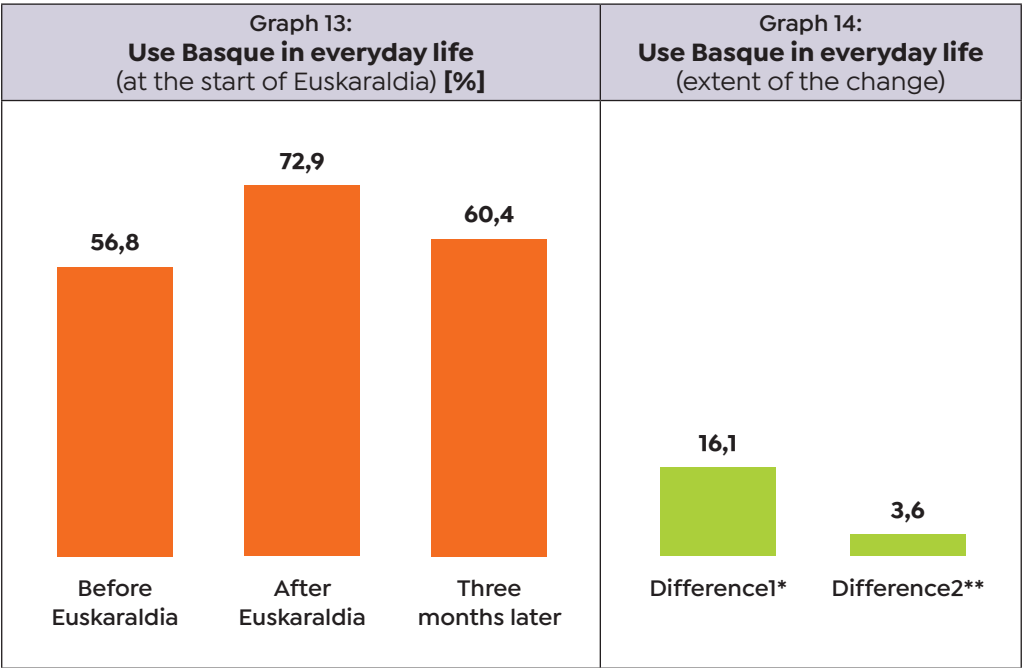


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The criterion used in the previous section to analyse the linguistic behaviour of the participants was based on the responses to the question «What linguistic behaviour do people have when the interlocutor is known to you and understands Basque?». In this section, however, the use of Basque is analysed from another perspective, taking into account «the weight or presence of Basque in the everyday life of the participants». Thanks to this data, it is possible to see the proportion of participants who «live their lives» in Basque the context of their day-to-day relations.

More than half of the people in the cohort say that when Euskaraldia started «all» or «almost all» of their day-to-day relations took place in Basque (56.8%). This proportion grew by 16.1 points throughout Euskaraldia, and despite the fact that three months later the tendency had declined, at the end the growth was 3.6 points in comparison with the initial situation.

18. The cohort has a more female bias than the universe of Euskaraldia; specifically, 7.8% more. In the light of the data, however, as the linguistic behaviour shown by men and women is similar it does not seem that the gender bias of the cohort should affect the analysis of the linguistic behaviour of the participants.



*Difference1: Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia after eleven days.
**Difference2: Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia three months later.

If the social areas are observed, the biggest change took place in the circle of friends (21.2-point improvement). It is precisely this area that had a lower presence of Basque at the start of Euskaraldia (47.3%). As for the other areas, Basque had a greater presence than in the circle of friends (58.5% in the workplace, 58.9% in the family, and 69.5% –the highest percentage– in the place of study), but it is precisely those in which the change produced during the intervention of Euskaraldia was less evident (around 11 points in all cases).

Three months later, some traces of the change remain: the biggest is in the area of friends (5 points), and the smallest in the place of study (2.2 points). It can be estimated that, in these areas, most relations are between people who know each other, and they are, therefore, relations in which the linguistic rules are already in place.

Graph 15:
Use of Basque in different social environments and with strangers
(at the start of Euskaraldia) [%]

Social Environment	Percentage [%]
Strangers	54,2
Friends	47,3
Workplace	58,5
Family	58,9
Place of study	69,5

Graph 16:
Use of Basque in different social environments and with strangers
(extent of the change)

Social Environment	Difference1*	Difference2**
Strangers	25,6	8,3
Friends	21,2	5,0
Workplace	11,9	3,1
Family	11,5	2,8
Place of study	11,2	2,2

Legend:
■ Difference1*
■ Difference2**

****Difference2:** Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia three months later.



Regarding linguistic behaviour in relations with strangers, the levels of change are clearly higher than in the family, the workplace and the place of study, both throughout Euskaraldia (25.6 points) and three months after the end of the initiative (8.3 points), although not so different in the relationship with the circle of friends.

It seems that it has been easier to change linguistic behaviour with strangers than with friends and acquaintances. Perhaps the type of contact with strangers consists of shorter and probably more superficial interactions. Furthermore, as these are new relationships, they do not have the baggage of habit and history. In contrast, in relations with friends, conversations can give rise to deeper interactions, the periods of interaction can be longer, and the inertia of the relationships may trigger affective elements of great potential.

3.5. Sociolinguistic practice

Euskaraldia has fostered certain behaviours that break the mould of habitual sociolinguistic practices such as bilingual conversations¹⁹ or conversations with people who have difficulty speaking the language²⁰. Some of these behaviours are analysed in this section.



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3.5.1. Communicative situations

The participants were asked about their reaction to certain communicative situations that are related to the language skills and linguistic behaviour of their interlocutors. Specifically, they were asked about these four communicative situations:

1. The interlocutor speaks in Basque and it is clear s/he does so fluently.
2. The interlocutor speaks in Basque, but it is clear s/he does so with difficulty.
3. The interlocutor speaks in Spanish or French but you know s/he understands Basque well.

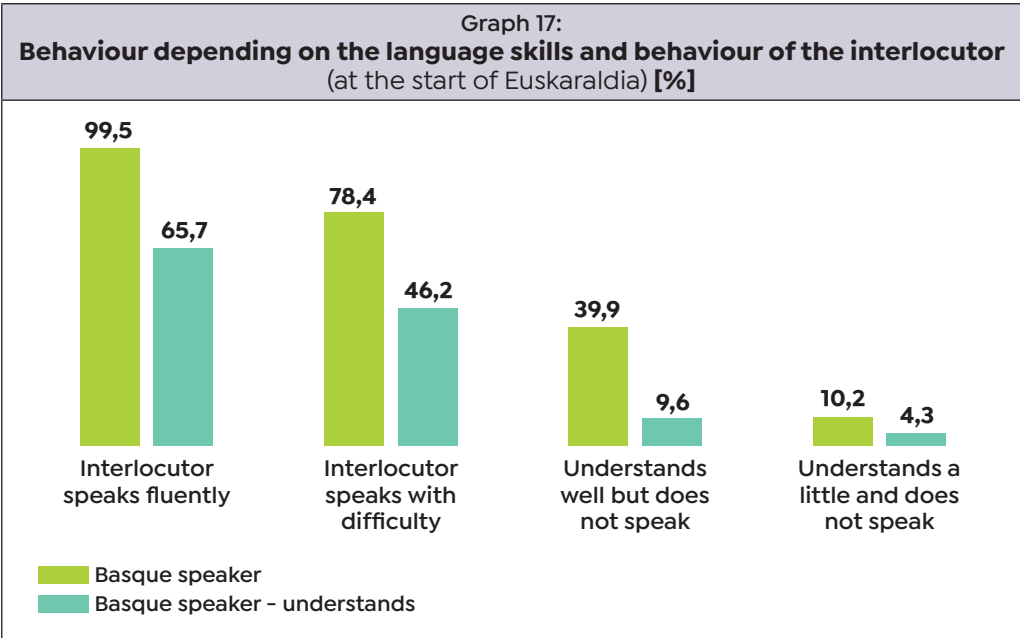
19. When, in a communicative relationship between interlocutors, each one speaks in a different language.

20. Speaking Basque with people who do not understand it well or have difficulty speaking it.



4. The interlocutor speaks in Spanish or French, although you know s/he has an average understanding of Basque.

In monolingual relations –i.e. when the interlocutors only communicate with each other in Basque– the level of oral expression of the interlocutor has a great influence on the linguistic behaviour of the speaker (see Graph 17). When, in a conversation, the interlocutor speaks in Basque and it is clear that s/he does so fluently, almost all the *euskalduns* in the cohort (99.5%) say they have a clearly favourable reaction to speaking in Basque. In contrast, if as they converse they note that the interlocutor experiences difficulties in speaking Basque, the percentage of *euskalduns* who continue speaking in Basque falls slightly (78.4%).



In the area of bilingual conversations –i.e. when the interlocutors communicate with each other in two different languages– the tendency to continue speaking in Basque decreases in a more accentuated manner. If the interlocutor, even having a good comprehension of Basque, speaks in Spanish or French, the majority de *euskalduns* prefer to continue the conversation in Spanish or French, and only a minority say they continue speaking in Basque (39.9%). This tendency is strengthened when the inter-



locutor communicates in Spanish or French and it is suspected that s/he has an average understanding of Basque. In this case, almost all the *euskalduns* prefer to speak in Spanish or French, and only one out of ten would choose to continue speaking in Basque (10.2%).

A similar graduation is perceived in the case of the *passive euskalduns*, although the proportions are quite lower than in the case of the *euskalduns*.

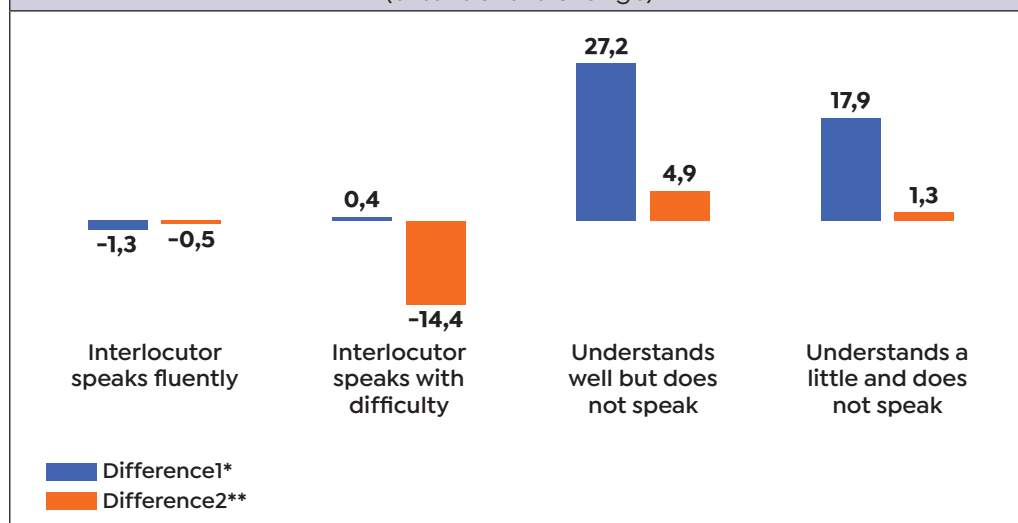
Regarding the evolution of linguistic behaviour during Euskaraldia and three months later, these are the most significant data (graphs 18 and 19).

In the first communicative situation (when the interlocutor speaks Basque fluently) there were no changes in the case of the *euskalduns*. When Euskaraldia began almost all the members of this category answered their interlocutors who spoke Basque fluently in Basque. As it was a stable trend from the beginning, it hardly underwent changes in the later measurements. In contrast, in the case of the *passive euskalduns* there was a certain margin to improve the linguistic behaviour in situations of this type. During Euskaraldia they improved by 7.9 points, and three months after the end of the initiative they stood at 2.4 points. In any event, although there have been changes, they are not very evident.

In the second communicative situation (when the interlocutor has difficulties speaking Basque), a striking feature was detected: a negative trend in the evolution of language-speaking habits was recorded. Euskaraldia has hardly had an influence in cases in which the interlocutor spoke Basque with difficulty, because neither the *euskalduns* nor the *passive euskalduns* changed their behaviour after 11 days. The changes were seen after three months: according to the data of the last measurement, in this type of communicative situation the members in the cohort speak less in Basque than at the start (14.4 points less in the case of the *euskalduns*, and 5 points less in the case of the *passive euskalduns*).



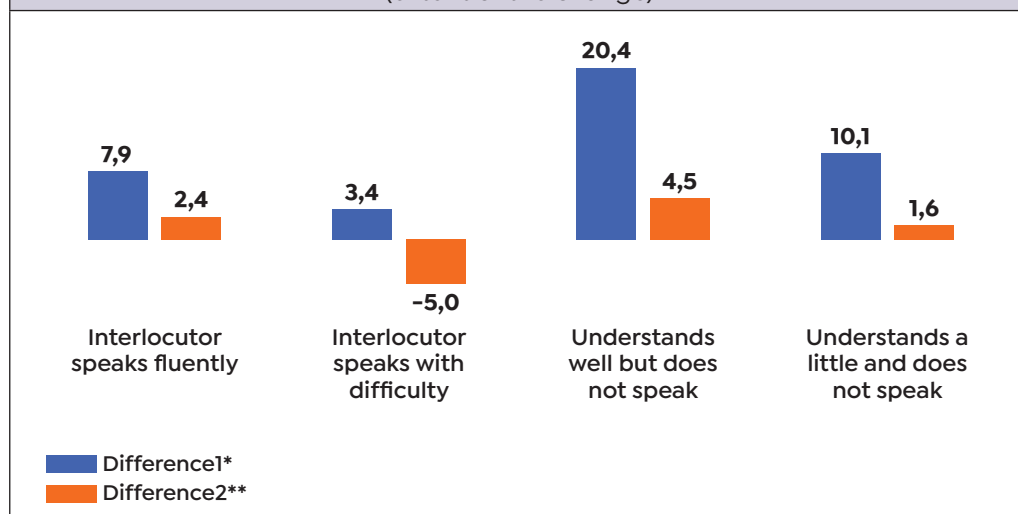
Graph 18:
Behaviour of *euskalduns* depending on the language skills
and behaviour of the interlocutor
(extent of the change)



*Difference1: Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia after eleven days.

**Difference2: Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia three months later.

Graph 19:
Behaviour of *passive euskalduns* depending on the language skills
and behaviour of the interlocutor
(extent of the change)



*Difference1: Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia after eleven days.

**Difference2: Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia three months later.



The most notable change took place in the third communicative situation (when the interlocutor knows Basque but speaks in Spanish or French). Both throughout Euskaraldia and three months later, the proportion of people willing to speak Basque when the interlocutor does so in Spanish or French increased. However, for these bilingual conversations to work well it seems an essential condition that that interlocutor should have a good level of comprehension in Basque. When this is the case, the *euskalduns* and the *passive euskalduns* considerably improved their tendency to speak Basque, both during Euskaraldia (27.2 and 20.4 points respectively) and three months later (4.9 and 4.5 points respectively).

As for the fourth communicative situation (when the interlocutor speaks Spanish or French and has difficulty understanding Basque), a slight attempt at improving linguistic behaviour is perceived. A few *euskalduns* and *passive euskalduns* improved their habit of speaking Basque in these situations during Euskaraldia (an improvement of 17.9 and 10.1 points respectively), although the improvement disappeared almost completely and there was a return to the starting situation three months after Euskaraldia ended.

Therefore, it can be said that significant changes took place in terms of bilingual conversations, provided it is perceived that the interlocutor has a good level of comprehension of Basque. In contrast, when the interlocutor has an average comprehension ability, there are hardly any changes in the measurements made three months after the initiative ended.



3.5.2. Perception of ease/difficulty in the face of different behaviours

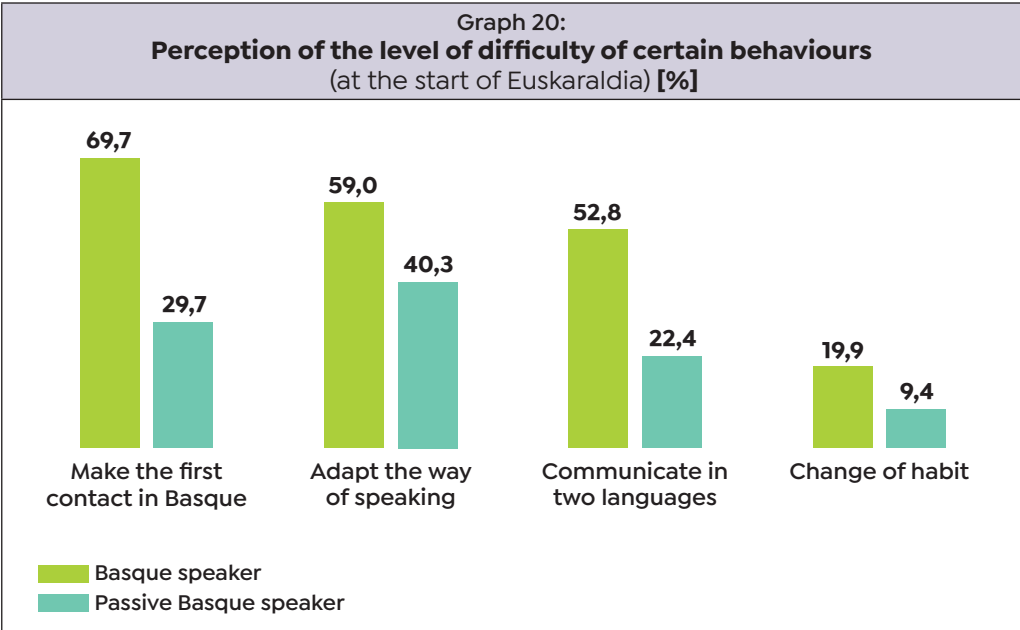
The participants were asked about the way in which they perceived the difficulty or ease of carrying out certain linguistic behaviours. Specifically, they were asked about these four types of behaviours:

1. *Make the first contact in Basque*: address strangers in Basque as a first option.
2. *Adapt the way of speaking*: when conversing with people who have difficulties in speaking or understanding Basque, adapt one's way of speaking to facilitate communication.
3. *Communicate in two languages*: when one interlocutor speaks in Basque and the other in Spanish or French, provided that both understand the two languages.

4. *Change habit*: change the established linguistic habit of speaking in Spanish or French with friends, and acquire the habit of doing so in Basque.

When Euskaraldia started, «making the first contact in Basque» was the easiest option for the *euskalduns* («easy» or «very easy» for 69.7%). However, it was more difficult for them to «adapt the way of speaking», «communicate two languages», and the most difficult of all, «change habit».

For their part, the *passive euskalduns* found the four options «difficult» or «very difficult». Of the four behaviours proposed, «adapting the way of speaking» was the least difficult (40.3% of the *passive euskalduns* found this «easy» or «very easy»); in second place, «making the first contact in Basque»; followed by, «communicating in two languages»; and the most complicated, «change habit».

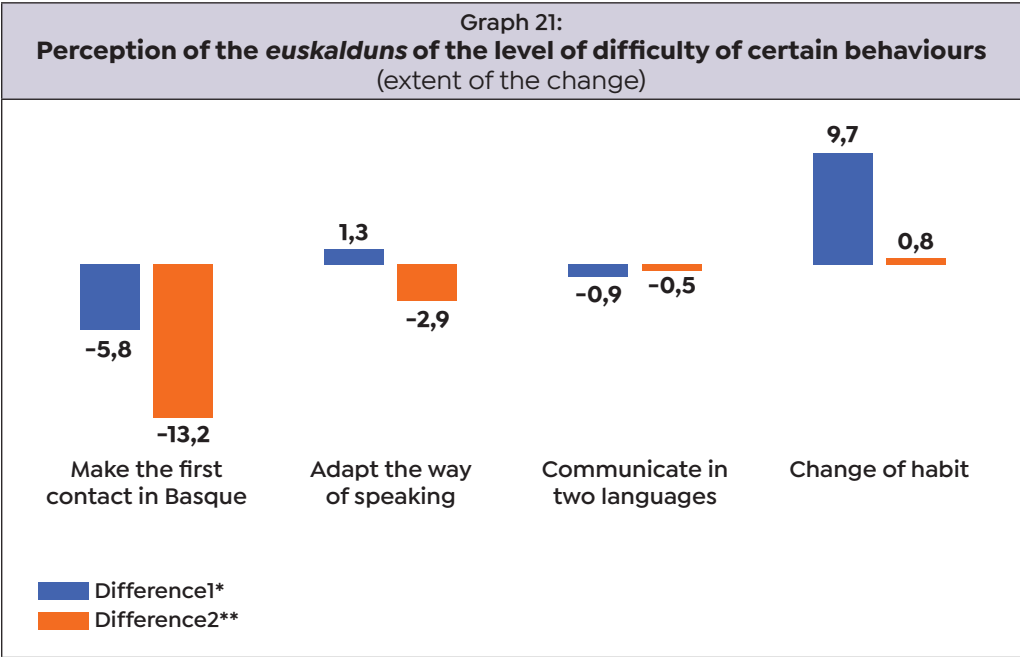


As can be seen from graphs 21 and 22, the changes and the proportions of perceptions recorded in these four linguistic behaviours are smaller than those recorded for the variables analysed so far.

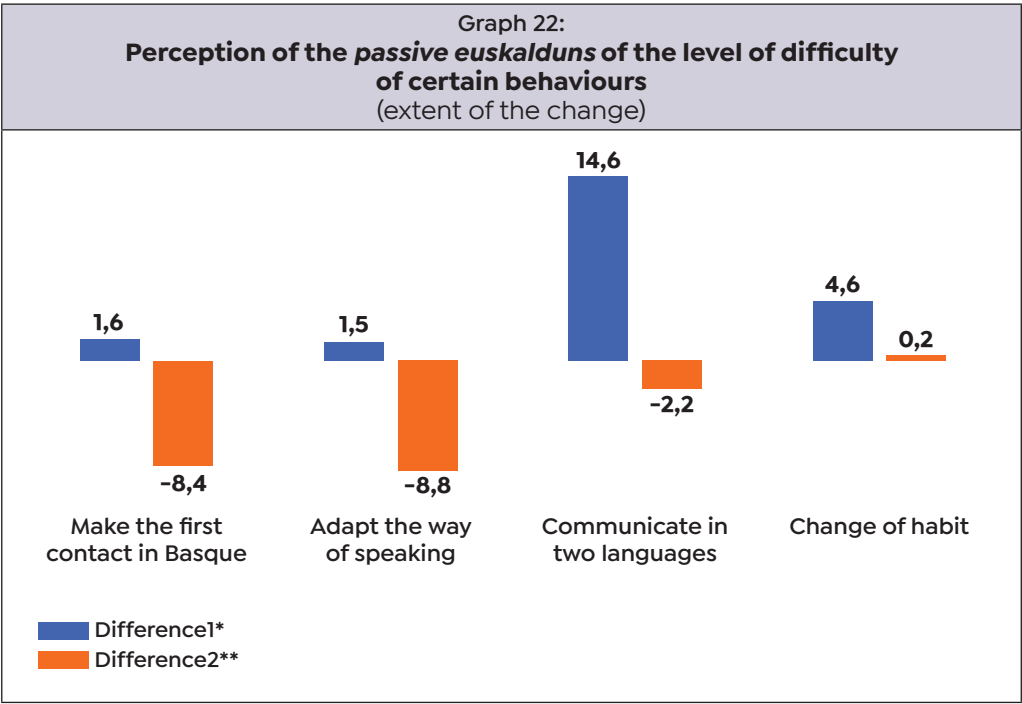
Different movements have been detected. In some cases, certain behaviours were more difficult than was thought at first (for example, «making the first contact in



Basque» or «adapting the way of speaking»). In these cases, it could be said that during Euskaraldia some of these difficulties posed by the practice of these behaviours have been highlighted, and the possible result is a more negative perception at the end than at the beginning. In contrast, in other cases the perceptions have shown the opposite, and the behaviours that initially appeared difficult («communicating in two languages» and «change habit») were easier or more feasible than was expected. In any event, this perception was only recorded during Euskaraldia; three months after it finished, and as the participants returned to everyday life, this positive perception has almost completely disappeared and a return to the initial situation has taken place.



*Difference1: Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia after eleven days.
**Difference2: Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia three months later.



***Difference1:** Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia after eleven days.
****Difference2:** Reflects the influence of Euskaraldia three months later.

Both in the case of the *euskalduns* and the *passive euskalduns*, the perception of difficulty has tended to increase regarding «adapting the way of speaking». This phenomenon coincides with a tendency that was analysed in the previous section (see Graph 19). In the previous section, it was said that there was an increased tendency of participants to stop speaking Basque when the interlocutor had problems speaking the language. The same tendency seems to appear in the data for this section. It could be thought that, when there are difficulties related to the interlocutor’s language skills, efforts need to be made on the part of the speaker in «adapting the way of speaking», with the clear aim of improving understanding. In this respect, it is clear that Euskaraldia has not led to any major change.

The reading of the situation regarding «making the first contact in Basque» is different. Although the third measurement shows a greater perception that it is a difficult behaviour, this negative perception does not seem to have an influence on the real linguistic behaviour of the participants, as the percentage of people who «always» or «almost always» speak to strangers in Basque as a first option increased considerably

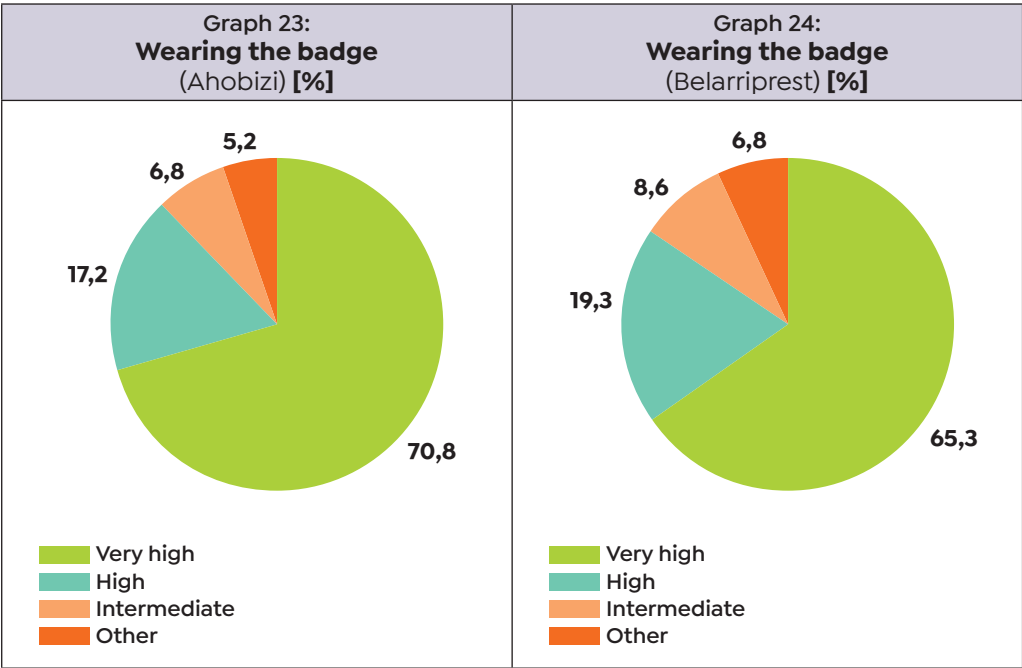


throughout Euskaraldia, and in the data collected after three months, this positive change is still present (see Graph 16). In this case, it could be said that the strategy of making the first contact with strangers in Basque has gained ground thanks to Euskaraldia.

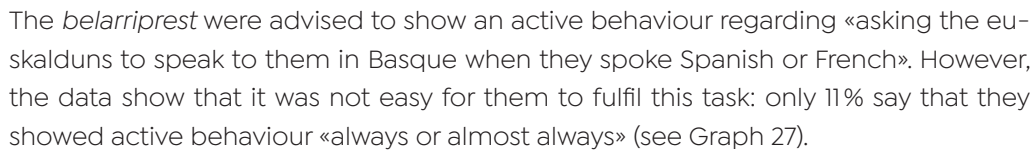
3.6. Euskaraldia on the inside

3.6.1. Completion of tasks

One of the tasks required of the participants by Euskaraldia consisted of using the badges symbolising the role assumed by each one during the 11 days of the intervention (*belarriprest* or *ahobizi*). The results indicate that 71% of the *ahobizi* wore the role badges «always or almost always» in the 11 days that Euskaraldia lasted. In these cases, therefore, we can speak of a very high level of compliance (see Graph 23). In the case of the *belarriprest*, 65% wore the badge «always or almost always» (see Graph 24).



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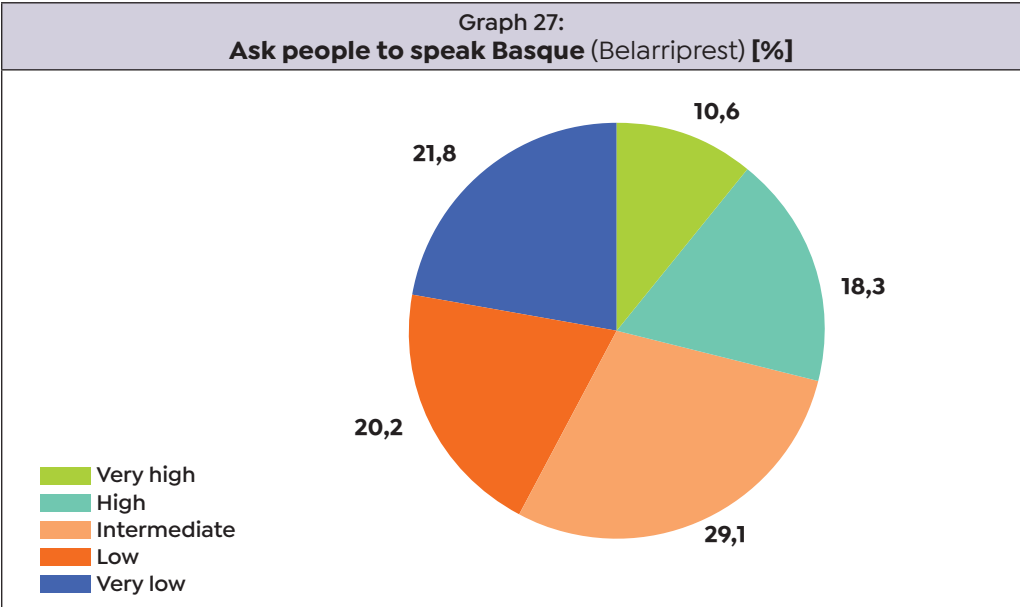


It is possible that the *belarriprest* considered this way of acting as not particularly suitable. As a hypothesis, it could be considered that the fact of questioning the language that the interlocutor has chosen spontaneously to explicitly request a change of language could be perceived by many people as rather rude. Another possible factor is a supposed relation to hierarchical relationships, whereby some *passive euskalduns* could feel «inferior» linguistically to the fluent *euskalduns*. If this is true, the fact that someone considers they are in an inferior position asks someone (who they think is in



a superior position) to change their linguistic behaviour could be potentially embarrassing and uncomfortable for a lot of people. Naturally, there are many social norms (all of them powerful) behind this behaviour.

This could be an interesting area for Euskaraldia. The collective attempt to neutralize the sociological context that prevents the development of this behaviour many provide opportunities to convert the role of *belarriprest* into a more active role than at present.



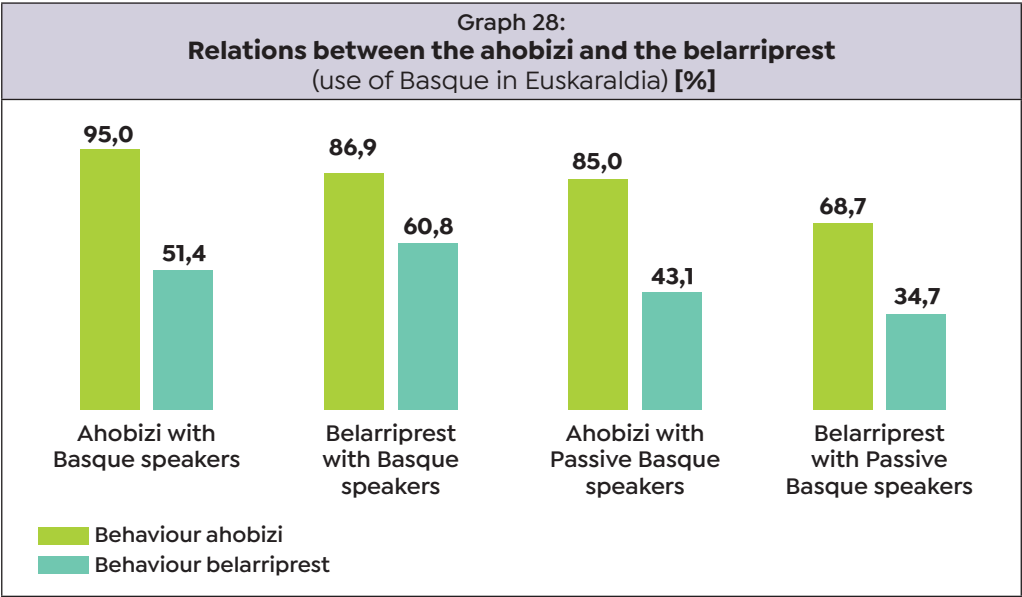
3.6.2. Linguistic relations between the ahobizi and the belarriprest

In the second questionnaire the participants were asked about their linguistic behaviour in relation to the people who wore the *ahobizi* or *belarriprest* badges. The questions were formulated in two senses: 1) they were asked about how much Basque they used when speaking with the *ahobizi* and the *belarriprest*; 2) how much Basque the *ahobizi* and the *belarriprest* spoke when communicating with them. For the data provided in this section, only the information extracted from the second approach was used, i.e. information on the perception of how the *ahobizi* and *belarriprest* communicated with them (see Graph 28).

How do the participants perceive the linguistic behaviour that the *ahobizi* showed towards them? It should be remembered that the *ahobizi* had the explicit task of speaking Basque with everyone who understood the language, so they should have spoken Basque to anyone wearing an Euskalaldia badge. Therefore, this information is another indicator of the level of compliance of the function of the *ahobizi*. The data collected were:

- 95% of the *euskalduns ahobizi* say that the people who wore the *ahobizi* badge spoke in Basque «always or almost always» or «quite a few times».
- 86.9% of the *euskalduns belarriprest* say that the people who wore the *ahobizi* badge spoke to them in Basque «always or almost always» or «quite a few times».
- 85% of the *passive euskalduns ahobizi* say that the people who wore the *ahobizi* badge spoke to them in Basque «always or almost always» or «quite a few times».
- 68.7% of the *passive euskalduns belarriprest* say that the people who wore the *ahobizi* badge spoke to them in Basque «always or almost always» or «quite a few times».

In the light of these data, it could be said that the *ahobizi* complied with the linguistic rule required by Euskalaldia to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the linguistic profile of the interlocutor, although always at quite a high level.





How do the participants perceive the linguistic behaviour of the *belarriprest*? The *belarriprest* did not receive any specific request to speak Basque. Therefore, what emerges from the analysis is the spontaneous reaction of the *belarriprest* vis-à-vis the use of Basque. The data show the following:

- ▶ 51.4% of the *euskalduns ahobizi* say that the people who wore the *belarriprest* badge spoke to them in Basque «always or almost always» or «quite a few times».
- ▶ 60.8% of the *euskalduns belarriprest* say that the people who wore the *belarriprest* badge spoke to them in Basque «always or almost always» or «quite a few times».
- ▶ 43.1% of the *passive euskalduns ahobizi* say that the people who wore the *belarriprest* badge spoke to them in Basque «always or almost always» or «quite a few times».
- ▶ 34.7% of the *passive euskalduns belarriprest* say that the people who wore the *belarriprest* badge spoke to them in Basque «always or almost always» or «quite a few times».

It is clear that the social and collective dynamics created by Euskaraldia has naturally and effectively encouraged the *belarriprest* to use Basque actively within the scope of their possibilities. Communication is an interactive and collective task, so its positive effect is visible in all those who participate in it, even though the functions of each person may be different. Here, it is worth mentioning that many *belarriprest* took the initiative of speaking Basque in their direct relations with other *belarriprest*.





4.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

This section summarises the main discourses collected through the qualitative research. These discourses have been obtained, on one hand, from the testimonies of people who participated in Euskaraldia as *ahobizi* and *belarriprest*, and on the other, from the people who worked in its organisation. Specifically, of the 453 testimonies collected, 46% correspond to organizers and 55% to citizens. Of the latter, 21% are from *belarriprest* and 79% from *ahobizi*.



4.1. Strong points of the initiative

4.1.1. Dimension and nature

Euskaraldia has been a meeting point, a place where people, associations and institutions of varying opinions and nature come together, and where everyone acted in a collective manner around a common objective.

At the heart of this movement are the discourse and the nature of the initiative, both very highly considered by the participants. In the discourse, the participants appreciated its «**respectful**», «**inclusive**» and «**positive**» tone. This, far from setting linguistic communities off against each other, has fostered «**assertiveness**» and «**empathy**» among the speakers.

«A constructive, positive message that did not go against anyone²¹».

The practical nature of Euskaraldia has also been rated very highly by the participants. According to their opinion, basing experience in the use of Basque –and not so much in supporting or defending it– the initiative has contributed «*originality*» and «*appeal*» to the event.

This consolidated nucleus has attracted a range of stakeholders in the Basque Country... institutions, associations, groupings and municipal councils of different types. The **inter-institutional working and cooperation network that has emerged around Euskaraldia has received very positive opinions**. It is believed that it has helped Euskaraldia to grow, giving it more «*visibility*» and «*legitimacy*». In turn, it is thought that the wide territorial scope covered by the event has propitiated an attractive and stable framework that has encouraged citizens to participate.

«Having the support of official bodies has given greater visibility (...) to build more solid infrastructures (...) and open a lot of doors more easily».



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The participants perceive that, **thanks to the initiative, Basque has been put back at the head of social issues, encouraging reflection and debate around the language question**. Furthermore, it is thought that Euskaraldia has brought about a change in the way of staking a claim for Basque in a more dynamic and participative way, moving away from the usual approaches and providing a much more friendly and attractive tone.

«Very good. We have celebrated the fact that we are euskalduns. In Nafarroa (Navarre), the Basque language has always been controversial (linked to contexts of protest), but things have changed during the initiative. It has been a very good idea. (...) Positive feelings have been aroused».

4.1.2. Group nature

Being a social exercise, Euskaraldia is based on reciprocal linguistic relations. This means that, although the *ahobizi* and *belarriprest* participants have each played their

21. Two remarks on the testimonies that are attached to the report. First, the quotes in Basque have been translated into Spanish for the purposes of this report. Second, the quotes are examples of certain ideas or discourses. The interpretations and conclusions of the document have been prepared from other discursive fragments, as well as those presented here.



role, they have not done so in an isolated way but have interacted with their surroundings in an ongoing collective effort. **Thanks to this effort to communicate in Basque, we have witnessed the emergence of «mutual help»,** relations of «empathy» and cooperation, giving rise to **feelings of belonging to a group and a collective awareness.** The complicity that emerges from these linguistic practices gives meaning, legitimacy and identity to the initiative, and offer support and protection to the participants.

In some cases, this ‘social umbrella’ has helped the participants to carry out the tasks proposed by Euskaraldia to a greater extent. On one hand, because they have often found a more understanding and friendly environment in which they can change their linguistic habits, and on the other, the fact of acting in groups provides protection and legitimacy for their linguistic practices.

«I seemed easier to do it in a group (for example, at work, when we got together in the same group plus one ahobizi)».

On other occasions, the group has gone beyond the strictly linguistic functions; Euskaraldia **has helped to get closer to a community, a culture and a society,** and to overcome the symbolic limits created by language boundaries. People felt «integrated» in Basque society.

«I would like to see this project done again, because I believe it is a great way of breaking the barrier that a language can represent, and it lets people from other places feel more integrated in Basque society».²²



4.1.3. Unconventional linguistic practices

THE AHOBIZI:

The aim of Euskaraldia is to create an environment that is conducive to Basque speakers using Basque with anyone else who understands it. To generate this context, one of the tasks of the *ahobizi* consisted of making the first contact in Basque.

If we look at the first-person testimonies collected in the study (i.e. each person speaks about their linguistic practices), it is clear that the requests made by Euskaraldia have been complied with in quite a satisfactory manner. In general, **the ahobizi responded**

22. The original quote is in Spanish, as it appears in the text.



with seriousness and, despite the difficulties, **they made an effort** to always make the first contact in Basque.

«I found it strange always starting conversations in Basque, although it has been a nice experience and I finally managed to do it».

«I have been more attentive, with the first words in Basque at all times, but I continued with what I have always done. Always in Basque with the euskalduns».

Nevertheless, the vision of the behaviour of the *ahobizi* changes slightly if we take into account the testimonies of third parties (i.e. references made to the linguistic practices of other people). In this case, regarding the linguistic requests made, it is clear that some ***ahobizi* did not participate as rigorously as was hoped**.

*«I have seen some *ahobizi* who did not start the conversations in Basque».*

*«The *ahobizi* spoke in Spanish among themselves, and that annoyed me».*

Another of the tasks to be done by the *ahobizi* was to continue the conversation in Basque when the interlocutor understood the language. In the testimonies collected we can see that, in general, the *ahobizi* made an effort and tried to fulfil the commitment.

«Because we tried to speak Basque with people whom we started conversations in Spanish, and it was very nice to see that other role among us».

When it came to a change of linguistic habits, the *ahobizi* found a receptive and favourable atmosphere. **The context of Euskaraldia helped the speakers, and removed the difficulties and obstacles that they usually had to deal with**. Among other things, they believe that the initiative has largely avoided the fact that speaking Basque is considered a lack of respect, or that there are situations against the use of Basque.

«In my circle, I have seen that always starting conversations in Basque has gained certain social support and legitimacy, leaving the matter of lack of respect aside. We have started by speaking Basque in a more relaxed way».

«I've enjoyed it, because my friends did not ask me why I spoke in Basque; usually, when I speak in Basque outside Euskaraldia, my classmates look at me askew and that does not make me feel comfortable when speaking the language».

THE BELARRIPREST:

Euskaraldia also suggested a series of tasks to the *belarriprest*, among them, that of asking their interlocutors to speak to them in Basque. According to the testimonies





collected, the *belarriprest* acted in a similar manner to the *ahobizi*, and showed, despite the difficulties, a good attitude when performing the task.

In the testimonies in first person (i.e. where the *belarriprest* talk of their own experiences), some say that **they have managed to change their language-speaking habits with people around them** in such a way that people have spoken Basque more to communicate with them. In such cases it is seen that the *belarriprest* have got people around them to speak to them in Basque, even without specifically asking them to do so.

«My experience has been wonderful; people never spoke to me in Basque before, but since my participation in Euskaraldia they do».

In evaluations of third parties (i.e. describing the linguistic practices of others), the same opinions appear: the attitude and efforts of the *belarriprest* are highlighted, and a very positive opinion of the enthusiasm and strong will they expressed during the initiative is expressed.

«I would highlight the efforts of the belarriprest».

«What I was most pleased or surprised by were the desire and intention shown by some belarriprest; I didn't expect that».

Despite not being an explicit task of the *belarriprest*, **many of them decided to speak Basque** with friends/acquaintances and, in general, were pleasantly surprised at finding a friendly and receptive environment.

«My experience as a Belarriprest was very good. People spoke to me in Basque from the start, and that makes you speak it too. Not only that, you have the feeling that you can speak Spanish if you don't understand something and not feel judged for it, because the people are aware that you are making an effort to learn Basque».²³

Far from being anecdotal changes, **some ahobizi and belarriprest** have tried to make their efforts last beyond Euskaraldia and **express a desire that these changes should continue in the future.**

«Euskaraldia gave a chance to many people around me (and to myself) to opt for speaking Basque quite naturally. I now speak in Basque with my younger sister and some friends... we have normalised the use of the language among us».

23. The original quote is in Spanish in the text.



4.1.4. Testing the power of using the language

One of the best lessons that both the *ahobizi* and the *belarriprest* have learned is that changing language-speaking habits can help to take great strides forward in the promotion of Basque.

«I've realised that it is up to us to foster the use of Basque, to live in Basque. It's a matter of awareness, will and habit».

One of the key factors in changing language-speaking habits is bilingual conversations. They are cases in which each interlocutor speaks in a different language, and despite the fact that both understand what the other is saying well, an uncomfortable situation is created due to linguistic asymmetry, which generates discomfort and concern. In general, the tendency in situations like this is to balance the conversation, and this happens when one of the interlocutors adopts the language of the other to make the conversation smoother and easier. However, the first one who changes his/her language for that of the interlocutor will have given up his chance to communicate in his/her own language, and the linguistic relationship becomes defined in favour of the other language. In this case, it is important to be able to hold out and wait for the other person to take the first step towards the change. Indeed, this was one of the tasks proposed to the *ahobizi*: hold onto Basque in bilingual conversations. On many occasions, this task was done in a very conscious manner.

«I have spoken in Basque more with the belarriprest around me. As they don't speak Basque, I always used to speak to them in Spanish, but now I do so in Basque. I have seen and learned that I can speak Basque with people who understand it, even though they answer me in Spanish».

Most of the bilingual conversations in which the speaker holds out and continues using Basque have ended up in a satisfactory manner. **The efforts of the *ahobizi* have served, on many occasions, to change the language-speaking habits of their interlocutors,** helping to increase relations in the Basque language.

«As I spoke to the people who sometimes speak in Spanish (but know Basque) in Basque, they switched to Basque».

«Over the 11 days my friends have had the opportunity to realise that they have changed their habit of speaking to me in Spanish and it is very difficult for them to change language. What I find most surprising, however, is that they have made a great effort to make that change and continue with the project. They have not considered it a game and have seen that I had difficulties speaking in Spanish, and that makes me very happy».





4.1.5. Change of linguistic perceptions

As well as driving a change in linguistic practices, Euskaraldia has also transformed the perceptions that exist about them. An intentional change in language-speaking habits also changes the relationships that one has with one's immediate environment. That is where one gains awareness about the practices that were previously seen as normal or habitual. The sharp edges, circumstances and opportunities of these old and new practices become clear, and an updating of the vision takes place. Euskaraldia has also unearthed some prejudices related to linguistic practices and has enabled people to «discern» new and different realities.

The context is one of them. Euskaraldia in general, and the use of the badge specifically, have helped to identify the people who speak or understand Basque, and at the same show that **the Basque-speaking community is bigger than was thought**:

«Nice. Using this «tactic» of always making the first contact in Basque and with the badge visible, I have seen that there are more Basque speakers around me than I thought. Surprise, contentment».

In many cases, the biggest surprises have come from people closest, discovering that some acquaintances who were not thought to be Basque speakers are actually able to understand it and even speak it. This means that one's linguistic map is extended.

«The truth is that I have been surprised when I hear people speaking Basque who I never heard use the language before».

Euskaraldia has also served to become more aware of the sociolinguistic situation of the different territories or towns/villages that make up the Basque Country. This perception is by participants who moved from places where Basque is spoken a lot to other, less Basque-speaking areas during the initiative. Some of them were pleasantly surprised when they saw more Basque-speaking contexts than usual.

«I was in Vitoria-Gasteiz one day during Euskaraldia, and I saw a change there, seeing people wearing the badge. I saw a city where more Basque is spoken than ever before, because I heard the language much more in the bars and out on the streets».

«As I live and work in Lekeitio, I have not observed the change too much, although when I go to Bilbao I felt the empathy of the people, I experienced special feelings and felt more euskaldun than ever, and proud of it too».

The initiative has also helped with the reflection on the use that each person makes of the language. **Many people feel that they speak Basque less than what they initially believed.** Likewise, this greater awareness has led to a conscious change whereby



individuals, when realising their linguistic habits, show a desire and make the effort to change or adapt them:

«It has been a good experience, right from the first day I realised I had a lot of bad habits and I have tried to change them during Euskaraldia».

4.1.6. Badge

Another request by the initiative is that the participants should wear the *ahobizi* or *belarriprest* badge. A lot of comments have been made about this, and among them we would highlight those that say that the badge **has had consequences and effects that have favoured changes to linguistic habits**. Among other things, it is said that it has worked as a sign of identification (and, therefore, a tool to easily recognise the community), or that it has provided the necessary protection and ‘courage’ required to speak Basque.

«Over the eleven days, the badges have given us a special energy to get rid of the fear of starting conversations in Basque, and that is what I appreciate most about the initiative».



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4.2. Weak points and difficulties in the initiative

4.2.1. Insufficient transmission of the message

One of the main weak points of the initiative has been communication. Specifically, one of the strongest sensations among the participants is that Euskaraldia has not been disseminated enough and that, as a result, many potential participants were not aware of the initiative.

«The lack of information in general; i.e., Euskaraldia was advertised on TV and in the administrative, educational and social spheres, but the message has not reached the ordinary person in the street; people were not very clear what it was about».

Particular emphasis is made that **the message was restricted to the «Basque-speaking world»**, and this prevents building new bridges to other non-Basque-speaking people or people who are fond of the country.



«I get the feeling that we have problems in getting outside our circles of activism. And our circle is active and committed. The real success and change of habits have come from a broader circle».

As well as not disseminating the message enough, some people have also said that the content was not sufficiently clear. Some participants complain that **people did not understand the level of commitment required in Euskaraldia**, and believe that this is because the initiative was presented as an event or festivity to support Basque, rather than an initiative based on the use of language.

«Although the initiative had good press coverage, some made it look like something festive in favour of Basque, and this diluted its significance and objectives».

Apart from the general nature of Euskaraldia, some people think that **the functions and characteristics of the *belarriprest* and *ahobizi* roles were not explained enough either**. This disinformation has created confusion, as in many cases people thought that the roles coincided with the use of the language, not with the level of knowledge of it.

*«Some older people related the figures of *ahobizi* and *belarriprest* with language skills, and although this was explained to them many times, they never understood it well».*

The participants were hesitant when choosing one role or the other, and even after doing so they did not fulfil the tasks given to them. In some cases, either because they did not understand what they had to do, and in other cases because the choice was made taking the symbolic value of the role into account instead of the linguistic reality of each person.

*«It seems to me that the roles were not explained very well, and the role that each person would play should have been clarified at the start. It seems that the role of *ahobizi* had a higher status, and that meant that everyone who could speak Basque were *ahobizi*. There were fewer *belarriprest*, and the two roles have been very much associated with 'competition'. We were not capable of getting this across».*

In the light of the responses, we can deduce that the *ahobizi* role enjoyed more prestige than that of *belarriprest*. Despite the fact that the organizers of Euskaraldia never sent any message of this kind, the meaning and functions of the roles have been related with dichotomous concepts of «*euskaldun berri*» (a Basque speaker whose mother tongue is not Basque and has learned it as an adult) and «*euskaldun zahar*» (a Basque speaker whose mother tongue is Basque), among other reasons because the latter are much better known in society. Nevertheless, based on this reading of





the role of *belarriprest*, it has come off worse, so most of the participants have chosen *ahobizi*. Many potential *belarriprest* were put off by the role that corresponded to them, and therefore did not sign up for the initiative. Others, in contrast, preferred to participate as *ahobizi*, even though they did not fulfil the conditions for carrying out this role (be able to speak Basque).

«I think that some people who should have been ahobizi received the belarriprest badge. In contrast, those who should have been authentic belarriprest were not bold enough to wear the badge».

4.2.2. Lack of commitment

Another failing when talking about the initiative is that of not having duly fulfilled the requirements. The participants allege laziness and «nonchalance», both for participants and institutions, and they think they have not fulfilled the level of commitment that the initiative required.

Special criticism has been reserved for the behaviour of the large institutions (universities, the Media, political institutions...). It is acknowledged that they supported the initiative, but **it is felt that little progress was made in the use of the language and in the change of language-speaking habits**, and they are criticised for not having suitably fulfilled the tasks for each of the roles. In the same direction, it is said that the institutions were «playing to the gallery», because they have not worked on trying to change linguistic practices, rather just showing their support for Basque.

«Although the role of the institutions seemed the right one to me, their behaviour was over the top, it seems that there was a lot of «posturing» on their part. It is fine to want to promote and disseminate Euskaraldia, but I don't think they have done a good job. I think that it is us, the citizens, who should drive this kind of initiative forward and change things, provided that the (institutions) help to promote the use of Basque in the population and encourage the habit of speaking Basque. In Euskaraldia, there seems to have been a lack of commitment by most of the institutional representatives».

A lack of commitment on the part of the participants has also been mentioned. Some of them have hardly attached any importance to promoting the change of linguistic habits, and have restricted themselves to just wearing the badge. Different reasons are put forward to justify this; among others, the lack of commitment due to a lack of desire or interest, or because the tasks in each role were not understood.





«Many participants just focused on the affective part, as if it were yet another campaign to promote the use of Basque. They have not taken the dimensions proposed by the exercise into account. I doubt that the fault was in communication or in the lack of commitment».

4.2.3. Some obstacles for linguistic change.

Even the participants committed to the initiative found it **difficult to comply with the linguistic requirements, and on some occasions they did not carry them out.**

Among the reasons mentioned most is «one's own inability». On many occasions, «sense of embarrassment», «fear», «feeling powerless» or «lack of confidence» have prevented people from fully plunging into language-speaking habits favourable to Basque.

«Prejudices, a sense of shame, of what others will say... that is what has stopped people from adopting (or not) certain attitudes».

On other occasions, the obstacles to speaking Basque have been down to the interlocutor him/herself. For example, the case of interlocutors who do not speak Basque. According to the participants, it was not easy to maintain bilingual conversations with people who understand Basque but do not speak it. As explained above, the feelings of discomfort and unease that bilingual conversations generate can be frustrating, and the process of adopting to the language of the interlocutor is not at all easy.

«In my personal case, I recognise that I experienced difficulties when only speaking Basque with people who were willing to listen in Basque and answer in Spanish».

In any case, the fact that the interlocutor speaks Basque and wants to speak it does not guarantee that the conversation will be an easy one. **The fact that the language level of the interlocutor is not as high as one's own may put a damper on the desire to continue using the language.** As in the case of bilingual conversations, in order to use Basque without effort or difficulties, it may not be sufficient that the speakers understand each other. Furthermore, it is very helpful that the conversations should be «smooth», agile and easy.

«Although my mother tongue is Basque, I found it quite hard to communicate in Basque with people, especially those who have difficulties, even knowing that this is the only way forward».





Another reason why the change of linguistic habits is easier or more difficult is the level of closeness or trust with the interlocutor. However, in the world of these relations there is no generalised trend, and although it was easier for some to do it with the people closest to them, others perceived fewer obstacles when changing their linguistic habits when talking to strangers.

«For me, the biggest obstacle was changing habits. It was difficult to speak Basque with people I speak to in Spanish every day».

«It was easier than I thought to change the habit of speaking in Spanish with people I know, because they knew I was taking part in the initiative. On the other hand, it was more difficult for me with people I do not see very often, or those with whom I do not have a close relationship».

In any case, there are several criteria that condition linguistic practices in the conversations held with both family/friends/acquaintances and strangers. One of these criteria is that the language used by the interlocutors is pre-defined. **When the language of the communicative relationship is pre-established (because one has the habit of using a certain language with someone, for example), it is hard to change;** among other things, because changing linguistic practice means that the relationship cools down or ends up being more uncomfortable.

«It felt artificial to me, and it is still difficult for me to speak Basque with close friends with whom I have always spoken in Spanish».

Furthermore, the level of involvement of the interlocutor has to be taken into account. In a communicative relationship in which the language is pre-defined, if the effort to make the change is only made by one of the interlocutors it will be difficult for the change to happen. If, however, and despite the fact that the language is pre-defined, the interlocutor responds positively to the gesture to make that change and makes an effort to carry it out, the change of linguistic habit is much easier to make.

«For me, the biggest obstacle was changing habits. It has been difficult to speak Basque with people I speak to in Spanish every day. Although we started in Basque, we ended up changing to Spanish (...) But one day I met my aunt, and she speaks Basque very well, it's her mother tongue. When she saw my badge, she started talking to me in Basque. It wasn't natural for me, but I gave it a shot».

Another reason mentioned is participation in Euskaraldia. The initiative has given legitimacy to the change of linguistic practice, and the mere fact of feeling identified as a participant has facilitated the change of language-speaking habits in favour of Basque.





«Changing the habit of speaking in Spanish with the people around me was easier than I thought it would be, because they knew that I was participating in this initiative».

4.2.4. Sociolinguistic zone

The sociolinguistic context has been one of the key factors that has largely hindered the implementation of the initiative. Indeed, **in both very Basque-speaking contexts and low-level contexts, the value of the initiative was not fully understood.** On one hand, because in very low-level Basque-speaking environments those who fit the profile and have an interest in participating in the initiative are very few in number, and on the other, in strong Basque-speaking environments the people who live their lives in Basque do not see the point of participating in it.

«Euskaraldia did not make much of an impact on the Left Bank of the river Nervión (Santurtzi)».

«In my opinion, the UEMA did not disseminate the message enough in Basque-speaking towns and villages. In the Basque-speaking places, the atmosphere was cooler than in the rest. I saw the risk of the «I'm all right, Jack» attitude for myself».





5.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

The high level of participation achieved in Euskaraldia (225,154 people enrolled) was excellent, and it can be said that the number of members who participated in the research study has not been seen before in the social sciences area. In Basque sociolinguistics, longitudinal studies with such large cohorts have very rarely been prepared, and this gives great value and solidity to the results presented here. It is true that the cohort used has some slight biases (a bit more female and *ahobizi*) but, despite everything, it can be claimed that it reflects the whole of Euskaraldia quite well.

Without returning in depth to all the ideas worked on in this report, these are the most significant conclusions in summary form:

- 1.** Euskaraldia was devised as a sociolinguistic exercise, and in the light of the data it can be said that the exercise took place correctly in its main aspects. **The participants fulfilled the tasks given to them to a large extent. Despite the margin for improvement, the majority of the participants made a great effort to fulfil their commitments.** For example, the *ahobizi* showed a high level of compliance in terms of speaking Basque with everyone who understands it, as well as making the first contact in Basque with strangers. The *belarriprest* found it harder to ask Basque-speakers to address them in Basque, because they considered it forced behaviour in most cases.
- 2.** As regards the linguistic use of the participants, Euskaraldia led to major changes in the 11 days the exercise lasted. **The change remained at a significant proportion even three months after the end of Euskaraldia.** In general, the linguistic behaviours of the participants changed considerably throughout Euskaraldia. However, not all the changes have taken root. Many participants mentioned that the exercise seemed too short, i.e. that 11 days are not enough

for a sociolinguistic exercise of this nature. It is quite likely that there was not enough time in the intervention to internalise and establish the new linguistic behaviours that emerged. However, significant features of the new linguistic behaviours have remained in the months following the end of Euskaraldia.

- 3.** In comparison with the general linguistic evolution, greater changes were detected among the people who had a lower level of language skills in Basque, in those who were not so used to speaking Basque and in those who lived in sociolinguistic zones where Basque was spoken less. However, no major changes were recorded among people who demonstrated a high level of skills at the start of Euskaraldia, i.e. those who had a clear tendency to speak Basque and those who lived in sociolinguistic zones where Basque was more widely spoken.
- 4.** The changes brought about in linguistic behaviour by Euskaraldia were general for all the participants, both *ahobizi* and *belarriprest*. They have all made progress in the use of Basque, although the most notable changes took place among the *passive euskalduns ahobizi*. They are followed by the *passive euskalduns belarriprest*, with the *euskaldun belarriprest* in third place, and finally the *euskaldun ahobizi*. It is important to highlight the way in which the general dynamics generated by Euskaraldia has encouraged the *belarriprest* to speak Basque in a spontaneous way.
- 5.** Although the *euskaldun ahobizi* category was the most numerous in Euskaraldia, the data show the worth of other options: a) those who, despite have a few limitations when speaking Basque, were confident enough to opt for the role of *ahobizi* (*passive euskaldun ahobizi*); b) those who, despite not experiencing any problems in speaking Basque, opted for the role of *belarriprest* (*euskaldun belarriprest*) and c) those who, despite having clear difficulties in speaking Basque, chose the role of *belarriprest* (*passive euskaldun belarriprest*). Given the positive impact that Euskaraldia has had on the linguistic behaviour of all the categories, it would be interesting to underline the good opportunities provided by the figure of *belarriprest* to attract new social sectors to Basque.
- 6.** It is clear that Euskaraldia has set two key mechanisms in motion for promoting the use of Basque. On one hand, **thanks to the badge a lot of people (especially the *ahobizi*) felt very supported in speaking Basque with everyone who understands it**, particularly when addressing other people who were wearing the badge (the social pact mechanism). Furthermore, **the use of Basque by some people has awoken the need to respond in Basque by others** (the linguistic symmetry mechanism). These two mechanisms have fed off each other to activate a positive cycle of the use of Basque.





7. **Euskaraldia has been able to construct the necessary socio-affective conditions to strengthen the use of Basque.** It has generated a protective and open context. Those who wished to speak Basque have felt socially legitimised to do it in a natural way. Many others have seen a good opportunity to get out of their comfort zone and start processes of change. Many people who had difficulty speaking Basque have felt encouraged to do so, leaving their embarrassment and fears behind. Finally, the possibility of being able to use Spanish or French (without hindering communication in Basque) has been a powerful self-regulating tool for many people who had difficulties speaking Basque to get involved in using Basque without holding back their progress.
8. **Euskaraldia has given many of the participants a more realistic perspective on linguistic practices.** There is a perception that a movement to create awareness of the linguistic reality has taken place. Many participants have realised that they spoke Basque less than they thought. This has been an incentive for many of them to try and improve their linguistic behaviour. Many others have seen that attitudes that did not seem so difficult to them before Euskaraldia are more complicated than they believed (adapting the way of expressing oneself when speaking to people who have linguistic difficulties, maintaining bilingual conversations, etc.). Nevertheless, this more realistic perspective has not hindered an improvement in linguistic behaviour. Many people feel they have become more aware in a positive way, realising that there are many more people who understand and speak Basque than they thought. Therefore, Euskaraldia has fulfilled an important function in terms of a lot of people made a realistic sociolinguistic analysis of themselves and their immediate environment, and most cases this realism has been an incentive to speak Basque.
9. Despite slight progress having been made, the **greatest difficulties** were detected in these three areas: a) the attitude of **speaking Basque with people who have difficulty understanding and speaking Basque has not spread**; there is still a major gap for speakers to express themselves in Basque naturally in communicative situations in which they should adapt their way of speaking towards registers that are easier or more comprehensible; b) **maintaining long bilingual conversations**; this practice has not taken root yet in the behaviours of the participants, although some progress has been made. c) **when inviting or asking an interlocutor to speak Basque**, many participants felt quite uncomfortable, particularly many who played the role of *belarriprest*. All these behaviours tend towards the use of Spanish or French in current sociolinguistic practice and culture, and this was the case for many participants in Euskaraldia. Although some progress has been made, there is still a long way to go in that



direction. And it is a necessary path to follow; it is where the challenge of relations between *euskalduns* and *passive euskalduns* lies, and that challenge is precisely one of the key factors in the revitalisation of Basque.



