



Language Documentation and Conservation in Europe



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Authenticity and Linguistic Variety among New Speakers of Basque¹

Jacqueline Urla^a, Estibaliz Amorrortu^b, Ane Ortega^c, and Jone Goirigolzarri^b

^a*University of Massachusetts*, ^b*University of Deusto*, ^c*“Begoñako Andra Mari” Teacher Training College*

This paper argues that the type of variety learned and used by Basque language learners is a key element in their self-perception as “true” or authentic speakers of Basque. Drawing on focus groups and individual interviews, we find that new speakers are for the most part strongly oriented towards the value of authenticity epitomized by local varieties. While new speakers report the utility of their mastery over the new standard Basque variety, they are not inclined to view this mastery as granting themselves greater authority or ownership over Basque. Rather they strongly valorize the informal and vernacular speech forms indexing colloquial speech and local dialect most identified with native speakers. The new speaker’s sociolinguistic context and motivations for learning Basque seem to be predictive of the strength of this orientation. The findings of this study point to the necessity of further study and documentation of local vernacular as well the urgency for language educators to find ways of incorporating the acquisition of local and dialectal features into language instruction.

1. INTRODUCTION. As we know, since the end of the Franco regime, we have seen impressive gains in staving off the decline of the regional languages in Spain’s historical peripheries, expanding public visibility and incorporating Galician, Basque and Catalan into the educational system, the media, and public administration. Increasing the number of speakers has been a goal in all three language projects. But as the numbers go up the question emerges: will these individuals actually be speakers who use and transmit their acquired language to the next generation? A lot hinges on a group of people we as yet know very little about.

Our project takes this up in the Basque Autonomous Community. In the past two years we have been conducting the first qualitative study of a cross section of new speakers of

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Basque that are popularly referred to by the term *euskaldunberriak*. Using focus group discussions and individual interviews, our goal is to gain insight into their demographic profiles, self-perceptions, attitudes towards speaking Basque and language revival more generally.²

New speakers are a sizeable and therefore critical element to consider in the future of Basque. Language shift towards Spanish was much more severe in the Basque Country than in either Catalonia or Galicia. At the time of Franco's death in 1975, Basque language speakers in what is now the Basque Autonomous Community hovered at barely a quarter of the population, most of them located in rural areas and small coastal villages. Today, while they are still a minority, the number of Basque speakers is closer to 37.5% – all of whom, of course, are also speakers of Spanish.³

Perhaps even more significant than the overall growth in numbers is the shift in the sociological contours of the Basque-speaking population. The once common stereotype of the Basque speaker as an elderly peasant, *baserritarra*, illiterate in Basque but with a rich command of oral tradition and vernacular dialect, has disappeared (Amorrortu et al. 2009). Today, thanks in large part to the popular support and institutional efforts for Basque medium education over the last forty years, Basque speakers are now encountered in both rural and urban settings and literacy in Basque (as well as Spanish) is much more common. In contrast to previous generations, he or she is also likely to be able to read and write competently in standardized Basque. Due to the generalized introduction of Basque into the educational system from the 1980s onward, we see a very noticeable increase in the proportion of young people who know Basque. As Figure 1 indicates, in the last twenty years the group of new speakers has increased considerably and now new speakers outnumber native speakers among youth in the 16-24 year old age group.

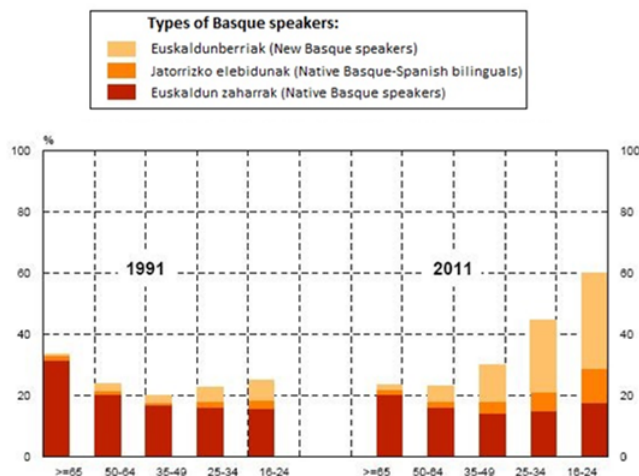


FIGURE 1: A Comparison of Types of Basque Speakers (Basque Government 2012)

² Our findings draw upon a preliminary analysis of nine focus groups and nine individual interviews with 63 new speakers between the ages of 18 and 56. We also draw upon an additional focus group with 9 native speakers aimed at assessing their attitudes towards new speakers.

³ This figure refers to people who describe themselves as being able to understand and speak Basque well. Another 17.3% of the population are “passive bilinguals”, that is individuals who describe themselves as being able to understand, but not speak Basque.

In this paper, we use the term “new speaker” to refer to those individuals who have learned Basque by means other than family transmission. In so doing, our goal is to set aside the ideological connotations and privileging of nativeness that terms like “non-native” or even “second language learner” tend to imply. At the same time, however, our project is very much interested in precisely the question of how the ideology of nativeness is experienced, reproduced or dismantled by new speakers.

We have been examining how new speakers situate themselves *vis a vis* the popular and widely used folk categories of linguistic identity: *euskaldun* (Basque speaker), *euskaldun zahar* (native speaker) and *euskaldunberri* (new Basque speaker).⁴ We found that new speakers’ categorizations of their own and other’s linguistic identity are strongly shaped by “mother tongue ideology” (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson 1989), that is, they see the language of one’s socialization in the home as giving rise to a single life-long linguistic identity. They tended to also rank these three identity labels – *euskaldunberri*, *euskaldun* and *euskaldun zahar* – along an increasing gradient of authenticity, as shown in Figure 2. Even those who started immersion schooling at the age of 2 or 3, held to a view of native speakers as fundamentally different and more authentic than themselves.

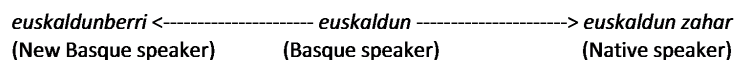


FIGURE 2: Continuum of legitimacy, per folk categorizations of speaker identity (Ortega et al. 2015)

Our study shows that learning the language, even to a high degree of competence, does not guarantee that a person will emerge thinking of him or herself as a true or authentic Basque speaker or be inclined to use it. This leads us to be cautionary, as many of our colleagues have noted, about taking the census figures as an accurate measure of active “speakers”. The way Basque new speakers talk about their identities also showed that, whilst these categories and identities seem to be permanent for some, in many other cases, and with the exception of *euskaldun zahar*, there exist pathways of authentication (Bucholtz 2003) that allow speakers to move on from the *euskaldunberri* category to *euskaldun*: access to Basque speaking networks and opportunities to use the language every day; the degree of competence, and access to the informal register and/or speaking a vernacular variety of Basque. Indeed, new speakers in our study underscored the difference between knowing a language and living in it. “Living in Basque”, that is, speaking it as a language of everyday life, was recognized as a pathway to developing a sense of identification as a Basque speaker. We found that individuals who had ample opportunities to use Basque in their everyday lives, particularly in their immediate social circles of family and friends, and had communicative competence in oral informal registers were those most likely to identify in an unmarked, unqualified way as Basque speakers, *euskaldun*.

In this paper, we explore the values of authenticity and authority in relationship to new speakers of Basque. By authenticity we mean attributions of being genuine, “real”, or credible speakers of a language. Authority has to do with attributions of respect and prestige to one’s way of speaking. We are particularly interested in the degree to which the variety or varieties of Basque spoken influences new speakers’ perceptions of themselves as legitimate speakers of Basque.

⁴ For further discussion see Ortega et al. 2015.

2. LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION AND THE RESTRUCTURING OF VALUE. Pierre Bourdieu's work (1991) is well known for describing the socio-economic structures that lead to the low prestige that is often accorded to minoritized languages or non-standard varieties. However, in approaching the question of value and legitimacy faced by linguistic communities in situations of language recovery, we have also found the theorizations of Kathryn Woolard (2008) to be highly useful. Woolard has argued that linguistic varieties acquire authority and are legitimated in terms of two competing axes or sets of qualities that she describes as anonymity and authenticity. The ideology of authenticity "locates the value of a language in its relationship to a particular community" (Woolard 2008: 2). In short, value can accrue to a language or speech variety when it is seen as the genuine voice of a particular group of people and place. Anonymity, by contrast, refers to an ideological constellation of values centering on indexical neutrality such that a language is seen to be purely referential, transcending any particular perspective, private interest, or distinctive social identity. Languages attributed this value are regarded as suitable for official use in the public sphere because they belong to everyone and no group in particular.

How these values come to be associated with languages is, as Woolard notes, very much conditioned by histories of power. State-supported dominant languages tend to have a monopoly over the value of anonymity. They are routinely presented as non-ethnic languages identified with citizenship, high culture and public life. Minority languages or vernacular varieties tend, on the other hand, to be limited to claiming attributes of authenticity. They are virtually never seen as suitable for generalized public or institutional use.

One way to understand the language revitalization movements that have been taking place in Spain is as mass-scale efforts to shift this structure of valuation. The preferred use of the term normalization, rather than revitalization, is telling. Minority language advocates see their project to be not simply to preserve or to destigmatize the language, but to enable and make *normal* the use of Catalan, Basque or Galician in official institutions and public life more generally.

In pursuing more favorable social attitudes and widespread uses for the minority language, language normalization initiates changes in habitual patterns of language use and value that can generate new sorts of tensions and insecurities among speakers about their ways of speaking (e.g. Dorian 1994, Wong 1999, Jaffe 1999, O'Rourke & Ramallo 2013). It is well recognized that corpus planning, sometimes called "modernization", can further aggravate insecurities on the part of native speakers when confronted with new or standardized forms.⁵ As Michael Silverstein (1996) has argued, the presumption of the existence of a common set of shared norms is fundamental to Western notions of what it means to be a "real", "modern" and "public" language. This creates a powerful motivation for linguistic minorities to standardize as they revitalize their language (see also Gal 2006).

In the Basque normalization project, a regularized and single set of norms was seen as indispensable for the new institutional roles Basque was to assume in education, publishing, media and administration. Standardization simultaneously operates as a synecdoche of the unity of the language and the nation. The norms for a Unified Basque, known as *Euskara Batua*, were developed by the Basque Language Academy in the course of the sixties and seventies and designed explicitly as an amalgam of different dialectal forms. It was intended by its creators to serve as the common written language of Basque speakers,

⁵ Language planners have long been aware of this, warning about the need to attend to gaining social acceptance for corpus reforms. Fishman (1983) famously argued that successful reforms required achieving a delicate balance of tradition and modernity.

occupying the roles that had exclusively belonged to Spanish.⁶ Intentionally de-racinated, values of anonymity and standard language ideology animated *Batua*'s creation.

Although there has been no official policy mandating *Batua* as the variety for official use, it was the form adopted for Basque-medium education and media, as well as public institutions of the Autonomous Community. *Batua*'s creators emphasized the norms were intended primarily for writing, but it quickly became the *de facto* "public" Basque voice. One of the outcomes of the confluence of standardization with these normalization policies is that individuals who learn Basque at school or at adult language academies are taught *Batua*. Unless they have made a special effort or have access to native speaker social networks, new speakers tend to have minimal mastery of the local dialect that native speakers tend to use for everyday talk. We were curious to know if and under what circumstances this state of affairs produced problems for new speakers.

3. ANONYMITY AND AUTHENTICITY IN NEW SPEAKER REPERTOIRES. The sociolinguistic landscape in the Basque Autonomous Community is highly varied and modes of learning Basque have changed significantly in the last thirty years. In smaller towns of the interior or coastal villages, the majority of the population may be native speakers. In the plains of Araba or big urban centers of Bilbao and Vitoria-Gasteiz hearing Basque in the street may be quite uncommon. The sociolinguistic context has been shown to be a significant variable shaping experiences and attitudes towards Basque (Amorrortu et al. 2009).

The design of our research sought to capture this diversity by conducting focus groups from different kinds of sociolinguistic contexts. Similarly, we sought to incorporate new speakers from different age groups and in so doing represent the two main avenues for language acquisition: (1) those who learned Basque in adulthood at Basque language academies; and (2) those individuals, mostly under the age of 35–40, who learned Basque via immersion or partial immersion schooling. While people in the second profile were enrolled in a Basque school by their parents, individuals in the first profile generally made the decision to learn Basque for themselves out of a combination of integrative and instrumental motivations, that is, out of personal conviction (a desire to learn more about and feel integrated into Basque culture), and a sense it would enhance work opportunities.

One of our most notable findings is the strong adherence of new speakers to mother tongue ideology (Ortega et al. 2015). By this we mean that our study participants overwhelmingly felt that someone who learned and spoke Basque in the home possessed a deeper life-long identification with Basque than they felt they could claim. Our data is consistent with the reported widespread tendency of new speakers to perceive native speakers as embodying a more genuine identification with the language (Bucholtz 2003, O'Rourke & Ramallo 2011). With some notable exceptions, most of our new speakers (regardless of their method of learning Basque) said they continued to see themselves as Castilian-dominant because it was the language they "thought in" or habitually spoke.

In focus group discussions, some participants described the utility of knowing *Batua* for obtaining certification to get certain jobs, for education, reading the newspaper and in general accessing the new markets opened to Basque following its officialization. However, it is interesting that while new speakers appreciated the instrumental value of literacy skills

⁶ Villasante (1980) is the key text written for popular audiences explaining the principles on which Euskara Batua is based and its intended use as a common or literary language. *Batua*'s creators gave precedence to striking a balance between intelligibility and preserving distinctive linguistic features. See Urla (1993) for further discussion.

in standard Basque, they did not see this as giving them any particular authority in the language. *Batua* did not enjoy greater prestige as might be predicted by its status as a standard, and none of our study participants described *Batua* as being more correct or proper Basque. Quite the contrary, several new speakers recount being told that *Batua* was “not really Basque”. A sense of artificiality, of being a “book language” or “made up language”, continues to dog *Batua* as it does other minority language standard varieties (Dorian 1981, 1994, O’Rourke & Ramallo 2011).

Moreover, some new speakers expressed a certain envy of their peers who could speak the local variety. Several expressed a desire to be fluent in what some called “local Basque” [*bertako euskera*], or “everyday Basque” [*eguneroko euskera*]. We can see this perspective in the following statement by a young university student who lives in a highly Spanish-speaking area in Greater Bilbao and who has studied in Basque from early childhood:

- (1) [*Niri gustatuko litzaidake*] leku bateko euskeraz egitea, lagunekin egunero euskeraz egitea, ba lotsarik gabe euskeraz egitea. (*Gazte-BI-E*, 317)
[I would like to] speak a Basque from somewhere, speak Basque everyday with my friends, speak in Basque without feeling embarrassed.

This feeling was more acute, as we might expect, in new speakers who lived in Basque-speaking areas and came into daily interaction with native speakers. The next two excerpts from individuals living in a highly Basque-speaking town show precisely these feelings: the first one (2) is by an older man and the second (3) by a woman whose Basque does in fact display a number of features of the local vernacular.

- (2) *Bueno, gero ba kalekoa ikasi behar, klaro, ze hango euskeragaz hemen Arratien, ba bueno, txokantea da, ezta? Egia da, ikasten dozuna euskaltegietan gero erabiltzeko, ba bueno, esparru hau ez da igual egokiena, beraz, ba bueno, kalekoa, eta bueno, ba horretarako be nahiko laguntza nuen ba lagunengandik, ez?* (*ZEA-D*, 10)

Well, then you have to study street [Basque], of course, since here in Arratia, well, [*Batua*] is shocking, you know? The truth is that what you learn at the language school is not the right thing to use here, so, yes, [you need] the street [Basque] and for that I had a lot of help from my friends, you know?

- (3) *Niri gustatuko jatan jakitea bertako euskalkia baina holan, ondo, esaerak eta dana. Niri horrek ematen doste penea ba holan ez dakidala. Nahiz eta ahalegindu, ta entzun, ta hau, ta bestea, baina gero ez dekot hori gauzea, hemen bertakoak iten dauen modua.* (*ZEA-E*, 151)

I would like to speak in the local dialect, be able to use its idioms and all that. I really feel sorry that I don’t. Even if I try, I try to pay attention, and all that. I just don’t have that, the way the locals speak here.

For new speakers who live in zones where native speakers are in abundance, acquiring mastery of informal and vernacular speech forms emblematic of native speakers was a particular point of pride. Being “mistaken” for a native speaker or receiving praise for being able to speak “our way” [*gure erara*] was a source of pleasure. Such mastery made these participants feel more entitled to call themselves “Basque speakers” rather than “new Basque speakers”. This is expressed in the following statement by a middle-aged school teacher from Bilbao who was posted to a school in the highly Basque-speaking area of Gernika:

- (4) – *Urte asko emon dodaz, esan bezala, Gernika, Gernika inguruan, eta gero Lea-Artibaitik, eta lana dela-eta, eta nik ikusi dot be bai hangoen erreakzioa, eta hainbatetan harritu egiten dira jakitean euskaldun barrixa nazela. (...) igual berba eitxeko era, edo ez dakit, ez dakit (...) Izan leike doinua, izan leike hiztegia... (BI-C, 166 / 170 / 172)*

I have worked a lot, first in Gernika, then in Lea-Artibai, and I have seen the reaction of the people there, how they could not believe I was a *euskaldunberri*. (...) Perhaps because of the way I speak, (...) it could be the pronunciation, it could be the vocabulary I use...

– *Batueraz ez duzulako egiten. (BI-A, 173)*

It's because you don't speak in *Batua*.

– *Gernikeraz egiten, edo... (...) ni pozik, pozik eta harro. (BI-C, 176)*

I speak the Gernika way... (...) and I felt happy, happy and proud.

– *Eta zuk zure burua euskaldunberritzat daukazu edo etapa hori ja...? (BI-M1)*

And do you see yourself as an *euskaldunberri*...?

– *Euskalduntzat, ez barrixe, ez zaharra, ez. (BI-C, 180)*

As an *euskaldun*, neither new or old.

New Basque speakers, who have learned Basque for integrative reasons, that is, for participating in Basque-speaking social networks and culture, find themselves in the following paradox: they have indeed learned “Basque” (i.e. *Batua*), but not the variety that is identified with belonging to those networks. They lack the variety invested with authenticity and therefore integrative value. This is a source of frustration for many, but not for all, as will be discussed next.

Further insights into the values attached to Basque varieties are gained through the analysis of Basque new speakers who learn the language purely for instrumental reasons. The following comment comes from one of our interviews with a university professor who said she learned Basque solely for work purposes and expressed no particular interest or desire to learn a vernacular variety:

- (5) *Es que mi historia es otra, entonces yo creo que, o sea, poder enriquecer el euskera con elementos sí, pero no tengo que hacer como que soy otra persona, nunca voy a poder ser como esta profesora porque, o sea, esa forma de hablar que tiene, ni de escribir, que es súper de casa, es que mi casa es otra casa. Entonces, no pasa nada, la suya es así, y me resulta bonito, pero la mía es otra cosa, no tengo que hacer que soy otra persona. (...) Yo lo que quiero es hablar el euskera que hable, pero dar mis clases bien, comunicarme bien, poder comunicarme con la gente que habla. [...] Pero no, yo no me apuntaría a un cursillo de, pues de otro dialecto, no. ¡Anda que no tengo que aprender cosas para hablar bien el batua!, como para meterme a otra cosa.⁷ (ELK-A, 180, 182)*

You see, my situation is a different one, so I think that, in other words, yes, I am happy to enrich my Basque, **but I don't have to become a different person**, I will never be like that teacher because... that way she has of talking and writing is very home-like, but the thing is that my home is a different one. And that's fine, hers is

⁷ This and other individual interviews were conducted in Spanish. Focus groups were conducted in Basque.

like that and I find it lovely, but mine is a different thing; **I don't have to behave like a different person.** (...) What I really care about is to speak Basque, any Basque, teach my lessons well, communicate with those who speak it. (...) But I would not sign up for a course to learn a dialect, no I would not. As if I did not have enough to learn in order to speak *Batua* well, imagine getting into something else.

The above comment about not having to “become a different person” points indirectly to *Batua*'s qualities of anonymity in contrast to the social indexicality she perceives in vernacular. Speaking vernacular might not only be harder for her, but seems to signal for her an identification she does not feel or want to convey. In other words, the standard *Batua* suits this speaker just fine, and that is precisely because of its de-racination.

Further insights into how new speakers perceive the differences between standard and vernacular varieties of Basque can be obtained by examining speakers who have access to and use both. Individuals who had schooling in *Batua* and also competency in the local vernacular allocated different roles to each. They describe themselves as using *Batua* exclusively for writing, but preferring and feeling more comfortable expressing themselves orally in the local variety.

- (6) *Idatziz beti batuaz. Ba, bueno, nik unibertsidadean iten doaz aurkezpenak eta nik in dot nire euskeran, nik eske batuaz iten badot, ingo dot txarto. Ni hobeto, hobeto azaltan naz Arratieraz. (ZEA-B, 160)*

I always write in *Batua*. Well, in the university, when I do [oral] presentations, I do them in my Basque; you see, if I do it in *Batua*, I will do it badly. I express myself better, better in Arratiera [the dialect of Arratia].

Interestingly, we found the same kind of division of labor described by youngest members of the focus group we conducted with native speakers:

- (7) – *Eta batua noiz erabiliko zeunkie zuek?(TO2-M1, 146)*

When would you use *Batua*?

– *Inoiz [ez].(TO2-B, 147)*

Never.

– *Nik batua..., ni batua irakurterako... [...] Irakurterako eta idazterako, bestela... (TO2-E, 148, 150)*

Batua I would use to read... [...] Just to read and to write, otherwise...

– *Hitz egiteko ez, sekulan ez? (TO2-M1, 151)*

Never ever to speak?

– *Ez, inoiz [ez].(TO2-B, 152)*

No, never.

For those individuals who have competency in both dialect and standard, the division of labor described earlier that had once characterized the relationship between vernacular Basque and Spanish is now replicated between *Batua* and local vernacular. This would seem to point to some degree of success in achieving what the Basque Language Academy had originally set out to do: make a standard literary variety. *Batua* has had some success in becoming perceived as the unmarked variety for public written communication in Basque.

Schooling opportunities, language policies, campaigns, and standardization have made it possible for Basque to become at least partially de-ethnicized in the sense that it is not seen as a language known or spoken only by people who claim Basque ethnic ancestry. Through *Batua*, a variety of Basque has emerged that seems to operate as a de-racinated public language for use in particular, restricted, largely formal and institutional contexts. This variety has captured some values of anonymity. But when it comes to the sphere of informal everyday talk, what new speakers aspire to are values of authenticity more than anonymity.

4. CONCLUSION. The type of variety learned and spoken by new speakers has been identified as a key element in the self-perception of new speakers as legitimate speakers. In particular, the knowledge and use of the standard *Batua* and/or a local variety seems to be crucial for many new Basque speakers. Why this is so cannot be explained without understanding the process of Basque normalization and how the values attached to Basque varieties, including the standard *Batua* created in the 1960s, have evolved. A full historical contextualization, however, must be left for another occasion.

We have argued that language normalization can be understood as a process of attempting to rework the structure of values attributed to Basque and the majority language, Spanish. Rather than viewing the minority language as having less prestige than the dominant language, we follow Woolard's suggestion that the value and respect for languages tend to be organized around competing notions of authenticity and anonymity, with non-normalized minority languages being primarily attributed values of authenticity while the majority language has exclusive claim to values of anonymity.

We have seen that a division of labor has emerged between *Batua*, standard Basque, and the vernacular dialect used for everyday oral communication by native speakers. Because new speakers are taught in the standardized variety, unless they live in Basque speaking areas and socialize in Basque speaking social networks, they do not tend to acquire fluency in the local Basque vernacular that native speakers prefer for everyday interaction. *Batua* is consequently identified as both the new speaker's language and as the customary variety for writing and some speaking in formal institutions.

Our research showed that new speakers of Basque were on the whole predominantly oriented towards and valorized acquiring markers of the local vernacular. The new speaker's sociolinguistic context seemed to be predictive of the strength of this orientation. It was stronger for those living in areas with high proportions of Basque speakers. We did encounter some new speakers who did not express any strong interest in vernacular. These were individuals who lived in predominantly Spanish speaking contexts and had learned Basque primarily for instrumental rather than integrative purposes.

New speakers did not consider that their knowledge of the amalgamated standard Basque made their way of speaking more correct, prestigious or gave them a claim to authority over the language. We might have expected them to claim such authority given the high value Western language ideologies place on literacy and standards. But it is not the case. While in the first years of the standardization process it was common to find *Batua* described as more "correct" than vernacular, that view has virtually disappeared and most new speakers, like native speakers, aspire to vernacular-like forms in everyday talk.

It would be reasonable to attribute this state of affairs to the as yet incomplete normalization of Basque in general. Spanish continues to function as the dominant language of the public sphere, the economy and the media-entertainment industry. Thus we might say that *Batua* fails to consolidate a position of authority and prestige over vernacular because

it occupies a very specific and limited niche in the limited public sphere of regional institutions. However, we think it is worth considering that *Batua*'s relationship to vernacular, the way authority and values are accorded in the Basque case, is not entirely a result of normalization "failure". Rather it may also be a product of the particularly populist nature of the Basque language normalization movement that has incorporated a large degree of discussion and debate around standardization. A wide base of popular involvement and open debate is responsible for tempering the predilection toward seeing standards as inherently superior to vernacular. Over the years, there has been a steady effort on the part of grassroots language advocates to produce an understanding of standard and dialect as each having their own place and value. The division of labour we encountered between vernacular and *Batua* among bi-dialectal speakers clearly shows this.

In sum, at the present time of the evolution of Basque, and bearing in mind the increase in new speakers of Basque, the discussions in this paper have helped us understand better the influence that the spoken linguistic variety plays in the self-perception of the speakers as legitimate speakers of Basque. The strong orientation towards authenticity, as well as the importance of integrative motivations for Basque language learning, explain the high value attached to vernacular forms, which are seen as the desired variety for everyday interaction. This explains the dilemma and frustration of many new Basque speakers who, despite their efforts to learn the language, do not quite acquire a sense of legitimacy, due to not having learned the "right" variety.

The value the local variety has for many new speakers must be taken into account in language policy and initiatives to increase language use, but it must still be further explored. More needs to be learned about the profiles of speakers and situations that most require a knowledge of the local variety; the extent to which dialectal features incorporated onto the informal register may be sufficient for a number of new speakers, and, ultimately, we should learn more about the language features and varieties that speakers associate with the value of authenticity.

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Jacqueline Urla
jurla@anthro.umass.edu

Estibaliz Amorrortu
esti.amorrortu@deusto.es

Ane Ortega
aortega@bam.edu.es

Jone Goirigolzarri
jone.goirigolzarri@deusto.es