BASQUE LANGUAGE SURVEY “1996”.

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Abstract
The following report submits the methodology and some contributions of a sociolinguistic survey on Euskera undertaken in 1996.

The Autonomous Community of Euskadi, with a population of approximately 2.215.000 inhabitants and an area of 7.235 km2 (population density 294 inhabitants/km2) forms part of a larger natural community (Euskalherria) to which both the Foral Community of Navarre, in Spain, and the French Basque country, situated in the region of Aquitaine in France, also belong. They are all connected by a common bond "Euskara", a language common to all Basque people, a pre-Indo-European language and one of the oldest in Europe, which at the time of the survey, was spoken by 547.600 Basque speaking people all over “Euskalherria”.

The target of this survey, carried out by sampling on 6.395 people, is to get full information on the situation of the language at the present, making up and enriching the information provided by the 1991 Population and Housing Census carried out in the Basque Autonomous Community and in Navarre, as well as in the French Basque Country whose Census do not provide this information. Moreover, it is intended to know the evolution of the language by comparing the data of this survey and the data got by the first sociolinguistic survey carried out in 1991, being both surveys the only ones on this subject taking in all Euskal Herria.

The survey analyzes the evolution of the linguistic competence, the use of Euskera, the interest shown and attitude adopted by the population with respect to its promotion, the diagnosis of its transmission within the family and the incorporation and the linguistic conduct of the “new Basque” who have learnt the language through the educational system.

The main contributions brought about by this survey are:

- A sampling design. A probabilistic multi-stage design together with a previous typological multi-variant analysis, based on the information provided by the 1991 Population Census carried out in the Basque Autonomous Community and in Navarre, and also on information based on the 1990 Population Census made in the French Basque country. The data have been weighted according to the population distribution provided by the Census and its projection of age and sex groups.

- Efficient inter-institutional collaboration. The following organizations have taken part in this survey: The Vice Council for Linguistic Policy of the Basque Government, the Sociological Prospecting Cabinet of the Basque Government, the Office of Linguistic Policy of the Government of Navarre, the Basque Cultural Institute in the French Basque country, INSEE-The National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, the Statistics Section of the Government of Navarre and EUSTAT-The Basque Institute of Statistics. The survey has been directed by the Office of Information and Investigation of the Vice Council for Linguistic Policy of the Basque Government and it has been partly financed by European Funds.

- The rapid presentation of the report and results. The survey design was completed, the information collected and a synthetic and graphic report of the final results was elaborated and presented within a six month period.

ENQUÊTE SUR LA LANGUE BASQUE 1996.