

The multilingual classroom in primary education in the Basque Country and Friesland:

beliefs of teachers and their language practices

A RESEARCH REPORT



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Foreword

The project *“The educational value of various aspects of multilingualism in the classroom of the Basque Country and of Friesland”* concerns a comparative study of the languages in the schools in the Basque Autonomous Community and in the Province of Friesland. It is part of the agreement between the general administration of the Basque Autonomous Community (Department of Education, Language Policy and Culture) and the Fryske Akademy (Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning). The current report is the outcome of a study about teachers in the multilingual classroom in primary education, which was carried out under a specific agreement covering the period January - December 2012.

The study is the result of a collaborative effort between the researchers Jildou Popma and Truus de Vries, at the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning of the Fryske Akademy and the researchers Eli Arocena and Durk Gorter of the Donostia Research group on Education And Multilingualism (DREAM) at the Faculty of Education of the University of the Basque Country. Eli Arocena and Durk Gorter have analyzed the data and have written the report together. Cor van der Meer is the project leader at the Mercator Centre and Mirjam van der Meij has translated most of the Frisian interviews into English.

This report comes as a continuation of a series of reports written on the topic of multilingual education in the Basque Autonomous Community and in the Province of Friesland. These reports are the result of the on-going project commissioned by the Government of the Basque Country called *“The added value of multilingualism and diversity in educational contexts”* as part of an agreement between the Government of the Basque Country (Department of Education, Language Policy and Culture) and the Fryske Akademy. The first report of this ‘Basque-Frisian project’, out of four, was published in 2010 with the title *“Languages and Language Education in Friesland; the role and position of Frisian in the province of Friesland and in Frisian Education”* and described the Frisian educational system with focus on the role of languages, specially the Frisian language, in education. This report provides the reader with information on the different stages of the educational system, all the way from primary education to higher education, the teaching of and presence of Frisian next to other languages in the Frisian multilingual schools, and the proficiency levels achieved by teachers and pupils in Frisian.

The second report was also published in 2010 under the title *“Frisian and Basque Multilingual Education: A Comparison of the Province of Friesland and the Basque Autonomous Community”* and covered the differences in education and language instruction in those two European regions where multilingual education is an important goal. The report gives general background information on both educational systems and compares the instruction of the minority language (Frisian and Basque), the dominant language (Dutch and Spanish), and English as the predominant foreign language, paying special attention to the use of languages as medium of instruction and the teaching of languages as a subject.

In 2012 a third report entitled “Multilingualism in Secondary Education: A Case Study of the Province of Friesland and the Basque Autonomous Community” was published. While focusing only on secondary education, this report aimed to describe more in-depth the use of the minority, the dominant and the foreign languages in the classrooms of Frisian and Basque schools. This report presents to the reader a more specific description of the use of the different languages inside and outside the classrooms, by the teachers and the pupils, in both regions. It also gives a description of the ways in which those languages are present in the schools.

In 2011, a fourth report was published as an inventory of trilingual education in Europe. This inventory called “Trilingual Primary Education in Europe; some developments with regard to the provisions of trilingual primary education in minority language communities of the European Union” aimed to describe the current situation of trilingual education in some of the multilingual regions of Europe. This report consists of eleven chapters where each chapter, written by different authors, describes trilingual primary education in a different multilingual region of Europe. The reader obtains thorough information on different aspects of the multilingual education such as the role of languages, the goals, the instruction, the obstacles and the results of three languages.

The current report discusses the experiences and the needs of language teachers in 19 primary schools in the Basque Country and Friesland based on 56 interviews with teachers of the two highest grades and with some headmasters. They gave their ideas, opinions, beliefs, etc. on various aspects of learning and they told us about their needs in teaching and using more than one language in a context of a multilingual classroom. By using a lot of direct quotes from the interviews the teachers are given ‘a voice’ in this report. Without the generous help and positive cooperation of all these Basque and Frisian teachers this report would not have been possible.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Primary school teachers play a key role in the learning of languages. These teachers work inside classrooms that are always multilingual, both in the Basque Autonomous Community (in the rest of the text referred to as 'Basque Country') and in the Province of Fryslân (the exonym Friesland is used throughout). The school children in the Basque Country either speak Basque at home, or Spanish, or both and in Friesland the home language of the school children is respectively Frisian or Dutch or both. All children are taught their home language and they also learn the other language as a second language and then English is learned as the third language, even though there are substantial differences between both regions as will be shown below. In some cases there are also other languages involved from children with an immigrant background.

Building on the outcomes and recommendations of the former studies in the Basque-Frisian project, this study looks into the ways in which language use practices of teachers are most successful in increasing the pupils' language proficiency level. It focuses on the multilingual classroom in the final years of primary education. Perhaps the most important goal of language teachers is to promote the continued language growth of their pupils.

The main objective of this study is, on the one hand, to investigate the language use practices and language teaching strategies and on the other hand the opinions and needs of primary school teachers. Questions are raised about the teachers' beliefs about multilingualism, what their needs are for improvement of teaching and in which ways they achieve the aims of language learning of the pupils.

Based on in-depth interviews conducted with a sample of teachers in both regions, the report analyzes how teachers think about teaching the minority language, the majority language and English in the multilingual classrooms of the Basque Country and Friesland. For this study the following two main research questions were formulated:

- Which language use practices and language teaching strategies for the different languages are applied by the primary school teachers?
- Which challenges and needs do teachers face in the multilingual classroom of primary education?

The report is divided into nine chapters. Chapter 1 is this introduction which includes the objectives of the report and an outline of the other chapters. Chapter 2 provides a background description of education in the Basque Country and the province of Friesland. Chapter 3 describes the design of the study and the data collection process. Chapter 4 describes the characteristics of the participating schools and the teachers according to different relevant for this study. Chapters 5 and 6 are the core chapters for the discussion of the results.

Chapter 5 presents the opinions of the teachers on the teaching of two or more languages, including subchapters on language policy, language aims and languages in the curriculum. It also comprises the importance of languages versus other subjects, the place of

language in the curriculum and collaboration among teachers. Further topics dealt with are language in practice, and a discussion of methods, resources and strategies for language teaching, wishes to teach languages differently and language testing and reporting.

Chapter 6 includes the results on the language related beliefs of the teachers with subchapters on language learning, advantages and disadvantages of multilingualism, needs of teachers, influences of parents, technology and society, the medium of instruction, different approaches to language teaching and successful language education.

Chapter 7 covers some ideas on teaching languages differently and a “Golden tip” these experienced teachers would like to give to beginning teachers. Finally, chapter 8 contains a summary and discusses some conclusions. There the most interesting aspects of this report are reviewed and possible implications for future research are presented.

Before describing the design of the study and the data collection process in chapter 3, it is useful to point out a few key aspects of primary education in both regions in chapter 2. In that way the reader better understands the context of the findings of the study. Readers who are familiar with both education systems can skip the next chapter and proceed to chapter 3.

Chapter 2: Background information on education in the Basque Country and Friesland

From the earlier comparative research studies between the Basque Country and Friesland it has become clear that there are important similarities and differences between both regions. In the administrative areas of the Basque Autonomous Community and in the Province of Friesland the content and the aims of primary education are similar. Both systems are basically the same, but differ slightly because there are six grades in primary school in the Basque Country and eight grades in Friesland. This is because 4 and 5 year old children in the Basque Country are technically still in the stage of pre-primary school and the Frisian children of the same age are in primary school. The pupils are all about the same age, around 12 years when they move on to secondary education. In the Basque Country the schools tend to organize the grades in so-called 'cycles'. The first cycle consists of grades 1 and 2, the second cycle of grades 3 and 4 and the third cycle consists of grades 5 and 6. In Friesland there are usually two 'stages' for the eight grades: the lower stage ('*ûnderbou*') consists of grades 1 to 4 and the higher stage ('*boppebou*') of grades 5 to 8. Some schools, however, distinguish between three stages, where there also is a middle stage ('*middenbou*') which then consists of the groups 3, 4 and 5.

In both the Basque Country and Friesland public and private schools are distinguished, but not in the same way. In the Basque Country there are three types of schools: public, *concertados* (grant-aided private schools) and *ikastolak* (a type of Basque schools that teach through Basque and promote the use of Basque in all spheres of life). In Friesland private schools are usually based on religious values (mainly protestant, some catholic, some other); about two-thirds of the schools are private and one-third public, although all receive the same amount of (state) funding.

Another difference worth mentioning is the fact that primary schools in Friesland are separate schools, in other words, they only teach primary education, whereas in the Basque Country it is common to find schools or 'educational centres' that teach all the way from pre-primary education to the end of secondary education, including vocational education and training (VET); most such larger centres are private schools or *ikastolak*.

A further important aspect in which Friesland differs from the Basque Country is the comparatively large number of small primary schools. In Friesland primary schools have on average 125 pupils whereas in the Basque Country many centres comprise education from pre-primary until the end of obligatory secondary and at those centres over 1,000 students may attend (see for further details Arocena Egaña et al. 2010).

The two regions the Basque Country and Friesland also differ in significant ways in which the minority language (Basque or Frisian) and the dominant language (Spanish or Dutch) are taught in relation to the home language. In the Basque Country the majority of children has Spanish as their home language, but the majority of children goes to a school where Basque is the main medium of instruction. In Friesland the situation is almost the reverse because about half of the children have Frisian as their home language, but in all schools the predominant language of instruction is Dutch, except for the limited number of schools that participate in the trilingual schools network.

Basque schools differ further because there are three linguistic models through which the pupils can receive their education in the Basque Country. The three models are:

- A model: education through the medium of Spanish and Basque as a subject.
- B model: education roughly 50% through the medium of Spanish and 50% through the medium of Basque.
- D model: education through the medium of Basque and Spanish as a subject.

These linguistic models were conceived about 30 years ago. Parents have the right to choose the linguistic model in which to enrol their children. Over time the enrolment pattern has changed. The registrations in the D model have increased substantially, those in the A model have decreased, and the number of pupils enrolled in the B model have remained more or less steady (around 20%). However, not all educational centres offer instruction in each of the three models; many offer just one model or two at most. By far most of the parents, around 70%, nowadays opt for the D model when registering their child for the first time. The reasons vary but research by the ISEI/IVEI (Basque Institute for Research and Evaluation in Education) has shown that the A model does not guarantee the learning of Basque. So therefore some schools have opted for not offering it and parents, over the years, have increasingly opted to enrol their children in the model that serves the goal of learning Basque. Therefore, many schools have gradually transitioned from offering three models to two or just one. Usually a model is phased out in a school, so that children can finish their school career in the model in which they started.

Over the years the D model obviously proved to be the best model to learn Basque, and the B model much less so. Still the B model maintains enrolment numbers relatively steady because children of immigrants and newly arriving pupils from outside the Basque Country tend to choose the B model. Teachers who were interviewed for this study confirmed this through their observations: *“Immigrants are enrolled in the B model”* (EUS18)¹ and *“We (the school) decided that if their home language is not Spanish they can enrol in the B model, otherwise they usually enrol in the A model”* (EUS9).

In one school included in this study the A model is phased out and therefore is offered only in the upper two grades of secondary education and in the two years of Baccalaureate whereas the B and D model both start from pre-primary. In this case the transition from three linguistic models to two was not easy. The change of the models sometimes created conflicts with certain parents or teachers. One of the teachers explains: *“This school has always been A model, nowadays it is B model, but I would like to have it [only] in D model. I think that it will not change until the older co-workers retire. Parents are also against it”* (EUS12). Another teacher adds: *“Some parents were against the teaching of some subjects in another language but Spanish”* (EUS14).

There are also schools where teachers are against having only the D model. One important reason is that some teachers do not have the required qualification to teach

¹ All teachers and headmasters who were interviewed are referred to by means of a code. EUS for teachers from the Basque Country and FRY for Friesland; every interviewee has received a unique, consecutive number.

Basque as a language or through the medium of Basque and such teachers may be afraid of losing their job, as one interviewed teacher clarifies: *“It has been difficult for some teachers to understand that that change (from A model to B and D model) was needed and important. Those teachers were scared that they would lose their jobs since they were not prepared to teach in Basque, but they had the opportunity to get trained and declined the proposal”* (EUS10).

Nowadays schools seem less strict about separation of the linguistic models, because they want to be first of all multilingual schools. After the implementation of a multilingual programme in the schools, one teacher explains: *“When I started it was called “Reinforced B-model”, where math and Spanish were in Spanish, English in English and all the other subjects in Basque. Nowadays, we have opted to reinforce the languages that most need it; so we are in a multilingual programme, not 1/3, 1/3 and 1/3 but with more English and Basque than Spanish because those are the languages that need to be practiced more”* (EUS14). Another teacher simply states: *“We do not say we have a linguistic model, we say we have a multilingual project”* (EUS10).

In Friesland, in contrast, the medium of instruction and the overall language of the school is the dominant language Dutch. Similar to the introduction of multilingual programmes in the Basque schools, in Friesland there are some 40 so-called ‘trilingual schools’ at primary level. In those schools the division between the languages is 50-50% Dutch-Frisian in the first six years and 40-40-20% in the last two years, when English is used as medium of instruction and taught as subject. This is the original “ideal” model from the time when the trilingual school programs were designed over 15 years ago, but in practice there is quite a bit of variation in the percentages. Moreover, there is a trend to start with the introduction of English as a subject in the earlier years. In that sense the Frisian trilingual schools are comparable to the Basque B model schools that basically also have a 50-50% division of Basque and Spanish but in practice also variation occurs. In general, English is taught from an early age onward in the Basque Country, starting at 4 years, whereas in Friesland they start later, usually at 9 or 10 years.

Another difference among Basque and Frisian schools worth to observe is the circumstance that in the Basque Country the majority of teachers have a full-time contract while in Friesland it is more common to have teachers with part-time contracts. Part-time also exists in the Basque Country but almost always means 50 per cent; in Friesland a part-time contract can range from 20 to 80 per cent (1 day to 4 days per week, usually expressed as FTE: full-time equivalent). In many cases teachers do so-called ‘duo teaching’, which means that they have a colleague, their duo teaching colleague, with whom they share the teaching of the same group; they can express it like *“I’ve got a duo-colleague for my group”* (FRY39). To explain how it works, for example, two teachers are the grade teachers of group 8; one teacher might have 0.4 FTE and teach only on Mondays and Tuesdays and the other teacher might have 0.6 FTE and teach on the other three days.

Although this study focuses on primary education, it also has to be noted that the secondary education systems in the Basque Country and in Friesland are rather different. After the pupils finish their primary education they must select the secondary school where

they continue their obligatory schooling. The main differences can be summarized as follows.

- In the Basque Country there is only one form of general secondary education and once the pupils finish their obligatory education at 16 years of age they must choose between:
 - *Baccalaureate* (Batxilergoa): two years of studies prior to university, or
 - *Vocational Education and Training* (*Lanbide Heziketa*): different modules where they prepare for a more technical professional career.
- In Friesland there are three types of secondary education depending on the pupil's ability level:
 - pre-university education (*VWO: Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs*);
 - senior general secondary education (*HAVO: Hoger Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs*);
 - pre-vocational secondary education (*VMBO: Voorbereidend Middelbaar Beroeps Onderwijs*).

The main difference in relation to the selection of the type of secondary education in both regions is the moment when the pupils are separated. In Friesland, the first and usually most important selection takes place at the end of the primary education, when the pupils are 12 years old. In the first grades of secondary education further selection takes place with as aim that a pupil reaches the most adequate level. In the Basque Country the main selection happens at the end of the obligatory secondary education, when the pupils are 16 years old.

Another important difference between both regions is the presence and the role of parents inside the schools. The answers of the teachers confirm the observation in one of the earlier reports that the role of the parents and their participation in the schools in Friesland is more substantial than in the Basque Country.

The teachers in Friesland have a lot of help of parents in the school and their presence and participation is quite strong. For example, there are: "*Mothers who help with creative activities, computer mothers, lice mothers, busy period mothers and reading mothers*" (FRY35) or formulated differently, parents do "*support manual skills, the school library, outside school activities and there are classroom parents*" (FRY40). (Although this teacher mentions "mothers" it can be assumed that there are also fathers). In contrast in the Basque Country the presence of parents is mainly limited to school meetings. The *Ikastolak* are an exception and the role of parents is stronger because these schools are cooperatives and thus 'owned' by the parents. There are schools where parents help with extracurricular activities such as sports and field trips, but in general, as Basque teachers report: "*They do not come as aids at all*" (EUS12) and "*They participate very little in general*" (EUS30).

Chapter 3: Design of the study and data-collection

After the aims and the research questions of the study were formulated, the next step was to design a sample of schools and of teachers who were going to participate. In parallel the construction of the research instruments took place.

An important step was to select a number of primary schools. The selection was done in both regions by considering similar criteria for inclusion to improve the possibilities of comparison (see table 1). In addition, some specific circumstances in each region were taken into account. One criterion was that children were not grouped together in combined classes with different levels during language teaching, so larger primary schools were deemed necessary. The minimum was estimated at 200 pupils per school (based on the calculation in Friesland of 8 grades of on average 25 pupils each). Another criterion was that the schools had to represent different types of schools: public and different private. As it turned out for the *concertados* (grant-aided) schools this was not the case completely, because all selected schools were members of the *Kristau Eskola* network, in which education is based on Christian values. It is a network that encompasses 137 schools in the Basque Country which is about half of all *concertada* schools. In Friesland, in the end, there was only one public school and eight private (all protestant) schools. Thus, the sample of schools cannot be seen as representative of all schools or of the 'average' school in both regions. Still, the sample does represent a wide range of language teaching approaches, which is the central issue in this study.

Table 1: Selection criteria for the schools

Basque Country:	Friesland:
More than 200 pupils (in primary)	More than 200 pupils
Teach three languages (Basque, Spanish and English)	Teach three languages (Frisian, Dutch and English)
Located in different language environments	Located in different language environments
Located in the three provinces that constitute the Basque Country	Not involved in another research study by the Fryske Akademy
Different types of schools (public, <i>concertado</i> and <i>Ikastola</i>).	Both types of schools (public and private-religious)

After the schools were selected the next step was the selection of teachers to be interviewed in each school. After contacting the schools to obtain their collaboration either the headmaster or head of the language department was asked to invite the teachers who teach at least one language in the two upper grades of primary education. Thus, all teachers had to teach in grades 5 or 6 in the Basque Country and in grades 7 or 8 in Friesland, which implies that the pupils are of the same age (10 to 12 years old). At the moment the schools were visited an effort was made to interview the headmaster as well, but in the end only five headmasters (in the Basque Country) were available.

The names of the schools, the number of teachers per school, their location and the linguistic model can be seen in the table.

Table 2: Names of participating schools, type, location and linguistic model of schools

Number	School	School Type	Location	Linguistic Model
1	Johan Willem Frisoschool	Christian	FRY, Ljouwert	Bilingual
2	De Fontein	Christian	FRY, Damwâld	Bilingual
3	De Bron	Christian	FRY, Boalsert	Bilingual
4	De Frissel	Christian	FRY, Feanwâlden	Trilingual
5	It Haskerfjild	Christian	FRY, De Jouwer	Bilingual
6	De Ark	Christian	FRY, Makkum	Trilingual
7	De Bolster	Christian	FRY, Balk	Bilingual
8	De Commanderije	Public	FRY, It Hearrenfean	Bilingual
9	It Lemieren	Christian	FRY, Tytsjerk	Bilingual
10	Elkar Hezi	Kristau Eskola	EUS, Oñati	D Model
11	Landako Eskola Publikoa	Public	EUS, Durango	B and D Models (B from grade 4 onwards)
12	San Viator Ikastetxea	Kristau Eskola	EUS, Gasteiz	A, B and D Models (A only from 3 rd grade of secondary onwards)
13	Eguzkibegi Ikastola	Ikastola	EUS, Galdakao	D Model
14	Larramendi Ikastetxea	Kristau Eskola	EUS, Donostia	D Model
15	Lauaxeta Ikastola	Kristau Eskola	EUS, Zornotza	D Model
16	San Benito Ikastola	Ikastola	EUS, Lazkao	D Model
17	LHI Zestoa	Public	EUS, Zestoa	D Model
18	San Andres Eskola	Public	EUS, Ormaiztegi	D Model
19	Salbatore Mitxelena Ikastola	Ikastola	EUS, Zarautz	D Model

The interview schedule (see below) was piloted in two Frisian schools. In the end those interviews were also included in the analysis, because it turned out later that the number of Frisian teachers was much smaller than the number of Basque teachers. Also because the schedule was only marginally changed, thus it seemed justified to include the information obtained during the two pilot interviews.

A total of 33 teachers in the Basque Country and 18 teachers in Friesland were interviewed, as well as five headmasters in the Basque Country. The unequal number of teachers in both regions was not foreseen, because the number of participating schools was similar (10 in the Basque Country and 9 in Friesland). The unbalance is mainly due to the fact that on average there are more teachers per grade in the Basque Country than in Friesland because the groups per grade are larger and in many cases divided into parallel groups that each has one teacher (tutor). At the same time it is more common in the Basque Country to find different teachers for different languages, for example an English language teacher. For different reasons headmasters in Friesland were not interviewed.

The main data collection instrument was a semi-open interview schedule (see the Appendix). The same interview question schedule was used in both regions and included questions grouped under five sections: (1) teacher's background, (2) school's general organization, (3) language beliefs, (4) language practices and (5) testing. The questions were open-ended and depending on the answers, a topic could be probed further or the teacher could be asked to elaborate on his or her answer. The questions were developed to cover the aim of the study to explore the language use practices and language teaching strategies of the language teachers as well as their needs in the context of the multilingual classroom. In addition, some headmasters were interviewed to get a more general perspective of the schools. The interview schedule for the headmasters included three sections: the headmaster's background, the language policy of the school and their own language beliefs. The interview instrument was tested for feasibility and adequacy before carrying out the actual data collection. The instrument proved to be suitable for its purpose and needed only minor adjustments.

Part of the protocol for the researchers was to observe a lesson prior to the interview with the teacher in order to collect additional data and supporting information that could help to conduct the interview. Thus, before the teachers were interviewed, the researcher asked permission to observe at least one language class. The observations of the language lessons did not follow a fixed scheme, but special attention was placed on language use, language teaching techniques and the teaching of the four language skills. The idea was to use the classroom observations as an aid for the interviews so as to be able to expand on the information given by the teachers. During the lesson observation, the researcher would take notes on the use of languages and the instructional activities that were carried out. The interview on the other hand, was conducted in a different room than the classroom, alone with the teacher, and was voice recorded and the same procedure was used to interview the headmasters. In some cases due to time-constraints of the teachers, a few questions in the interview schedule had to be left unanswered. The interviews were conducted in the language of choice of the interviewee, most of them Basque or Frisian.

One full-time researcher in the Basque Country and two part-time researchers in Friesland carried out the observations and interviews with the teachers and headmasters. During a period of three months, the three researchers observed a total of 38 language lessons and carried out 56 interviews with teachers who accepted to take part in the study. After all interviews and lesson observations had been completed, the researchers proceeded

to transcribe and translate the recorded interviews and systematize the lesson notes. An extensive protocol of each interview was translated into English. The interview protocols were entered into, coded and analysed with *Atlas.ti* (a programme for qualitative analysis of large bodies of textual or audio material).

Chapter 4: Characteristics of the schools and of the teachers

4.1 Participating schools

In the selection of the schools for this study, one of the criteria was that schools have at least 200 pupils. All, except two schools, fulfilled that prerequisite and table 3 shows the number of pupils per school. It must be remembered that some Basque schools serve all the way from pre-primary to secondary education while the Frisian schools are independent primary schools only (for this reason the type of school is also shown in table 3).

Table 3: Participating schools: name, size and type

Number	School	Number of pupils	Type of school
1	Johan Willem Frisoschool	270	Primary
2	De Fontein	200	Primary
3	De Bron	400	Primary
4	De Frissel	200	Primary
5	It Haskerfjild	300	Primary
6	De Ark	215	Primary
7	De Bolster	240	Primary
8	De Commanderiye	260	Primary
9	It Lemieren	54	Primary
10	Elkar Hezi	500	Pre-primary to Secondary (including Baccaureate)
11	Landako Eskola Publikoa	900	Pre-primary and Primary
12	San Viator Ikastetxea	1200	Pre-primary to Secondary (including Baccaureate)
13	Eguzkibegi Ikastola	700	Pre-primary to Secondary
14	Larramendi Ikastetxea	580	Pre-primary to Secondary (including Baccaureate)
15	Lauaxeta Ikastola	1200	Pre-primary to Secondary (including Baccaureate)
16	San Benito Ikastola	800	Pre-primary to Secondary (including Baccaureate)
17	LHI Zestoa	200	Pre-primary and Primary
18	San Andres Eskola	166	Pre-primary and Primary
19	Salbatore Mitxelena Ikastola	1100	Pre-primary to Secondary

The smaller schools have one group per grade and the larger schools usually have parallel groups. Independent of school size, most of the teachers reported that their groups had around 20 to 25 pupils in both the Basque Country and in Friesland. In five out of the nine participating schools in Friesland the groups were larger than 25 pupils, but never over 30. Also in the Basque Country there are two schools with groups of 28 and 29 pupils respectively. There are also three schools where the groups are smaller than 20 pupils, one reported to have 17 pupils. In general, in both regions the groups consist of similar number of pupils regardless of the size of the schools.

In both the Basque Country and in Friesland the schools with only primary education have a staff of between 16 and 20 teachers. The larger schools in the Basque Country, that offer both primary and secondary education, have more than 50 teachers employed; thus, the headmaster from a school with 900 pupils informs *“there are 72 teachers”* (EUS53).

All teachers are language teachers, but in the Basque Country, as explained in more detail chapter 5, there are a number of specialized English teachers. How many, depends on the size of the school. An English teacher from a small school explains *“I am the only English teacher”* (EUS4) and another English teacher from a larger school indicates *“there are three teachers of English”* (EUS14) in the primary school.

Not all schools in the Basque Country participate in the official multilingual programme initiated by the regional government or their umbrella organisation. When they were asked more in detail about the issue, four out of the five headmasters in the Basque Country made clear that their schools implemented such a programme. One school started five years ago, another one three years ago and one school is in its second year. The headmaster of the school that has not implemented a multilingual programme yet, said that it is one of their future plans; *“we do have a draft of a multilingual treatment but we need to develop it”* (EUS55). However, the schools that have the programme in place adapt it to their own needs, because as one of the headmasters informs: *“We have investigated and measured our results and we know what works for us. We need ... to have a multilingual programme based on the results and not on what is told by others”* (EUS52). All these five schools offer an “early start” of English in which pupils start at age 4.

Also other participating schools in the Basque Country have implemented a multilingual programme and in Friesland two schools are member of the trilingual schools network. In Friesland most schools have a language coordinator who plans lessons, selects methods for example for spelling, reading, etc. Also immigrant children with a different home language who fall behind in their studies may receive extra support from the language coordinator. In the trilingual schools this person also deals with issues related to their multilingual programme. Interestingly, when the teachers were asked whether they have a ‘language coordinator’, 12 Basque and 7 Frisian teachers said that they do not, or they do not know whether they have one. The other teachers and headmasters said that they either have such coordinator in the school or that there is a regional language coordinator. It seems that the role of the language coordinator is sometimes unclear to the teachers. It is, however, clear that there is a person or a team overseeing many aspects of language education, language policy and language use in both regions; *“she’s responsible for the*

language policy plan” (FRY45) and *“there is a team that works with the school’s language project”* (EUS14).

The teachers were also asked if they have contact with the secondary schools where their pupils move on to and whether they know how those pupils perform as far as languages are concerned once they are in secondary school. The Frisian teachers report that they usually do well in Dutch but the case with English is different, in some cases *“it doesn’t matter at what level they are, they just start all over again with the English method in the first grade (of secondary) with things like ‘my name is...’. But in a much higher tempo than at primary school”* (FRY34). In the Basque Country, the interviewees say that they do get feedback and that it is generally positive: *“we do comment with them orally and we also get written follow-ups. The level is good.”* (EUS32).

4.2 General characteristics of the teachers

The main criterion for selection of the teachers was that they teach in grades 5 or 6 in the Basque Country and grades 7 or 8 in Friesland so they all are teachers of children who are between 10 and 12 years old. Of the 56 participants 34 were female teachers and 17 male, plus 3 female and 2 male headmasters. The age of the interviewed teachers varies from 22 to 61 years. Some of them are beginning young teachers, many are middle aged and a few are not far from retirement.

Most teachers have extensive experience in teaching and on average they have worked as teachers for 19,4 years (the number of years of teaching experience varies between one year in several cases up to 40 years in one case. The headmasters have been on average 11,8 years in their job. Usually, the more experienced teachers had a lot to say about their language use and teaching strategies. Most teachers (and headmasters) have worked in the current school for quite a long time; a few of the older teachers even for over 30 years. They did not work in many schools; it seems that on average they have moved two or three times between schools. Overall, these teachers are experienced and know their schools well, but also their pupils and their community: *“I know the community well”* (EUS15). About half of the Basque teachers live in the community where the school is located, and some are originally from the same community and attended the same school themselves as a child, or, as one interviewee puts it: *“I am from this town, I was a pupil in this school, I have my two sons in this school, I work in this school, I am part of the community, I know it very well”* (EUS7). The teachers, who do not live in the same community, usually live in a community nearby and report to know the community where the school is located quite well (no information on this issue was collected from the Frisian interviewees).

All interviewed teachers have the teaching degree required to teach at primary school. In the Basque Country, all 33 teachers have a *Magisteritza* degree from university. Starting the school year 2009-10, the previous three-year long diploma study has become a four-year long bachelor’s degree. They have one of the six specializations that are available:

pre-primary education, primary education, special education, physical education, foreign language (English) and music. Six teachers have obtained more than one specialization. The teachers, who acquired their degree before 1990, when the educational reform called LOGSE ("*Ley Orgánica General del Sistema Educativo*") was established, got slightly different but comparable specializations. The Basque headmasters have not obtained a specific degree as a headmaster, but they do have the required teaching degree and later on they have received training on administrative duties and issues, or, as one explains: "*We usually get nominated to be a headmaster and then we get the training. Whoever gets most support from the staff gets elected and then gets the training*" (EUS56). This is different from Friesland where headmasters are appointed in the job by the school board and not elected by votation. In order to become the headmaster of a primary school a teacher needs the qualification for Director of primary education ("*Directeur Primair Onderwijs*"), in the past it was called headmaster degree ("*hoofdacte*").

In Friesland nine teachers have the *PABO* diploma acquired at the teacher training college which is part of the HBO which is a tertiary education institute, also called 'university of applied sciences'. The other nine teachers have the teaching degree from the *Pedagogische Academie*, which is the institute that preceded *PABO*. Nowadays at the *PABO*, the pupils specialize either in the 'young child' (groups 1 to 4) or older children (groups 5 to 8). On top of this the student can specialize in a specific subject or area.

Regardless of these differences, today in both regions future primary teachers need to attend a higher education institute and follow a four year course (240 ECTS) in order to acquire the necessary teaching qualification.

4.2.1 Language background and level of proficiency

As far as the mother tongue of the participants is concerned, 32 teachers have the minority language as their mother tongue, 22 have Basque and 10 have Frisian, 17 of them have the dominant language as their mother tongue, 10 have Spanish and 7 have Dutch, and 2 indicated that they have both the minority and dominant languages as mother tongue: one has Basque and Spanish and the other has Frisian and Dutch. Among the headmasters, 3 have Basque and the other 2 have Spanish as their mother tongue.

All interviewed teachers are multilingual, so they all know and speak at least two languages. An interesting difference among the Basque and Frisian teachers is that according to what they reported, the Frisian teachers know more different languages than the Basque teachers. Usually the Basque teachers report to know Basque, Spanish and English, and a few of them know French. Their colleagues in Friesland state that they know Frisian, Dutch, English and German, and a few of them know also Spanish, Italian or Norwegian. So they know four or five languages. An interesting observation is that at least three of the teachers in the Basque Country have knowledge of Galician, another co-official language in Spain, because their father or their mother came originally from Galicia. A couple of Frisian teachers also know another regional dialect, *Achterhoeks*, which is a variant of Lower Saxon from the eastern part of the Netherlands.

Not all teachers know the languages they mention equally well, their levels of mastery can vary substantially. Most teachers who teach two main languages, who are thus bilingual in Dutch and Frisian or in Spanish and Basque, report to have a high command of those two languages. There are, however, also teachers in both regions who report to have a low level of the minority language because they are monolingual in the majority language. Perhaps they learned the minority later on in life and reached different proficiency levels. Some learned due to work requirements and others because of their personal choice: *“I had to start learning (Basque) more seriously at age 50 and it was harder. It was because the school asked me to get certified in Basque”* (EUS27). As far as the language skills in the minority language are concerned, three out of nine Frisian teachers report to be able to only understand or just speak a little bit of Frisian, one specifies her skills as *“listening okay, speaking I can’t, and reading and writing not strong”* (FRY38). Regarding the Basque teachers, since they all need the proficiency certificate of Basque to teach in Basque schools, they report to have good level of Basque in the four skills, however, there is a teacher who teaches English who says that *“speaking in Basque well but writing is another thing”* (EUS29).

Teachers from both regions agree that their knowledge of languages is high enough for the level they teach; *“I think I know enough for this level”* (EUS5) and *“my level is good enough for primary education”* (FRY35). But even when the teachers think they are qualified for the languages they teach in general, most of them also feel that they need more training in languages. Half of the Frisian teachers and more than half of the interviewees in the Basque Country stated that they need, or would like to have more language training. Some specify this by saying that they need extra training in their English skills, others say that they need extra training in one specific skill in either the majority or the minority language. The reason can be that *“things change, rules change”* (EUS19), or, *“to review rules, to improve writing”* (EUS30) and, to improve *“spelling education”* (FRY48). Here a clear and important need of these teachers is identified.

4.2.2 Language background of their pupils and contact about language with parents

In general, the teachers know their pupils’ language background quite well, only six teachers, all from the Basque Country, report not to know the languages of their pupils’ parents, all the other Frisian and Basque teachers do know, either because they know the parents from the community or because they usually receive that information in the files of their pupils at the beginning of the school year. One teacher summarizes it nicely: *“This is a small town and I usually know them and also because we get that information”* (EUS23).

Contacting parents to specifically talk about language issues is something that does not usually happen. In Friesland as well as in the Basque Country, teachers do meet or talk with parents when it is necessary but not specifically about languages, or as they say: *“Not precisely about that topic”* (FRY55) and *“Not exactly about languages”* (EUS15). Only if there is a special urge for it, as one teacher says: *“Only when it has consequences for education”* (FRY48). As reported by the teachers, both in the Frisian and Basque schools, there is usually a meeting with parents at the beginning of the school year where different topics are

explained and discussed, and languages can be one of them. Later during the year teachers do not tend to contact parents to talk about just languages unless there is a special reason. In the case of the Basque teachers of English, they usually communicate with parents through the tutors of the pupils, as teachers say: *“I usually go through the tutor”* (EUS1) and *“In an informal way when there is a need, because the formal meetings with parents are done with the tutor”* (EUS21).

4.3 Opinions on training

4.3.1 Pre-service training

As was said above, all are qualified teachers, they all got the degree necessary to become teachers, but their opinion on the teacher training they received prior to becoming a teacher is in general not very positive. Only ten teachers among all interviewees, six in the Basque Country and four in Friesland believe their pre-service training was good enough and that they were happy with it. All 41 others are negative about the training they received. The reason is mainly the lack of knowledge about what really happens in the classroom and at school. They mention that what they learned was more theory oriented than practice oriented: *“it gives you a lot of theory but little practice; we did have training in schools but were not taught how to face pupils, all type of pupils”* (EUS31) and: *“there was not much structure and it was not really aimed at practice”* (FRY45).

Another opinion the teachers in Friesland and in the Basque Country agree upon is that the level of certain subjects during their initial training was low: *“I didn’t believe the level was high”* (FRY45) or, *“the level was too low”* (FRY48), or: *“as far as languages, the level required is often very low; there are people who do not master the language but pass the exams and become teacher of it”* (EUS14), and: *“we were tested for math and spelling but the level was low; grade 8 sums”* (FRY43). Along these lines, teachers in both regions felt there were subjects that could have been studied more in-depth and that there were others that should have been included in their training because they need them in their real life jobs. Some of the subjects these teachers would have liked to be included in their initial training can be listed as:

- *“methodology”* (EUS11), (EUS15)
- *“more didactics, pedagogy”* (EUS14), (EUS18), (FRY44), (FRY48), and (EUS56)
- *“tutorial related”* (EUS15)
- *“how to contact with parents”* (FRY43)
- *“how to face all types of pupils”* (EUS31)
- *“content”* (FRY34)
- *“time management”* (FRY35)

Some of the interviewees believe that teacher training has improved over the years. Taking into account that 37 of the 56 teachers graduated from university more than 15 years ago,

they believe that the initial training of teachers nowadays is better; *“the current plans are more complete”* (EUS21), and: *“I believe the PABO has improved”* (FRY48).

There are teachers in the Basque Country who have done more than one specialization and thus have received some of their initial training more than once. These teachers agree that the second time around was better, but mainly because they had the real experience of the classrooms and could relate what they learned during the training with what really happens in the classroom. That is another aspect that all teachers in the Basque Country and in Friesland agree upon: one learns in practice, or as they expressed it: *“you learn once you are in the classroom”* (EUS3), and: *“almost everything I learned I learned here at school”* (FRY48).

4.3.2 Continuous training

Teachers understand the importance of lifelong learning. Even though they have extensive experience, they are aware things change in education as do the needs of their pupils. Therefore, continuous training is needed, or, as one of the interviewees says *“training needs to be continuous; things change, ICTs for example, so as foundation, the initial training was good but then you need to do more”* (EUS24). As was repeated several times, training is an on-going process; it does not end with graduation. Teachers continue with their training taking in-service courses. How general this is can be demonstrated by the circumstance that all teachers except one, state that they have taken or are currently taking courses as part of their on-going training. The exception is a teacher who graduated recently and who has not had the opportunity yet. Most of the teachers inform that their schools encourage them to participate in in-service courses, and the headmasters report that the schools usually agree to the training needs of the teachers. On the other hand, one teacher in the Basque Country and two in Friesland claim that they are obliged to take part in in-service training; one Frisian teacher even says *“a lot of courses are imposed on us and then I am less motivated”* (FRY38). Most teachers however, believe these courses are necessary and welcome because they help them stay up-to-date with issues such as technology and new teaching methods.

According to the teachers most courses available are free of charge and in some cases there are grants available for courses that have a participation fee. Most courses in the Basque Country are organized by the overarching school organisations, such as the *Ikastolen Elkarte*, *Kristau Eskolak*, *Amara Berri*, and by the department of education, and in Friesland, by the school advisory centre CEDIN, the PABO's or other institutes. The topics are varied, some are oriented to specific subjects (math, language skills) and others are more general (ICT, child abuse, management). There are also special courses for headmasters (as reported by the interviewed headmasters).

Although there are a variety of courses offered, it seems that in both regions, schools and teachers are currently interested mainly in English and ICT related courses. As one of the headmasters says: *“right now, English is the most important thing for teachers”* (EUS54). There are different reasons why teachers and schools are interested in English related

courses. In the Basque Country, teachers mention that a need for tutors to be qualified in English is mainly due to the introduction of English in the lower grades and as the language of instruction of certain subjects: *“the school has also required me to get it (First Certificate). The school wants me to teach Science in English next year”* (EUS2), *“who knows what will happen in the future, we might be told that we need to teach English”* (EUS18), *“it is mainly in case I need to teach English in the future”* (EUS24) and *“maybe one day, if I got the certificate, I would teach in English”* (EUS33). Some teachers also say that the course is for personal reasons, just to improve their English skills so when they go on holidays abroad they can communicate better, or, as one teacher states: *“I travelled abroad and realized that it was necessary to communicate with others”* (EUS14).

Some teachers in the Basque Country have noticed that due to the financial crisis in Spain, there are less in-service courses offered. Some others say that they have not noticed that the amount of courses has decreased but they have noticed that there are fewer facilities offered to them to attend those courses. For example, if they were before able to attend some courses that were offered during school hours they are no longer able to go nowadays because the schools cannot afford to hire a substitute due to the cuts in funding. Nevertheless, these teachers also note that there are courses offered on-line which makes it easier to receive the training. In some cases schools allow only one member of the staff to attend a course and then afterwards expect the teacher to train the other colleagues in their school. Overall, there seem to be many ways and possibilities for these teachers to continue with their on-going formation.

4.3.3 Language teaching qualifications

As far as language teaching qualifications are concerned, there is an interesting difference between Friesland and the Basque Country. The Basque teachers are required to have language certificates to prove their level of knowledge. Therefore all teachers in the Basque Country hold the *EGA* certificate of proficiency in Basque (*Euskararen Gaitasun Agiria*). That certificate is supposed to be equivalent to the C1 level of the CEFR and it is required to teach Basque or through the medium of Basque. Some teachers mention they have the *“5th grade of Hizkuntza Eskola Ofiziala”* (EUS4), which is the *“Official School of Languages”* that depends on the Basque Ministry of Education. This 5th grade of Basque is also equivalent to the CEFR’s C1 level. Other teachers mention to have the *“First Certificate (Cambridge) in English”* (EUS31). There are no such certificates required to prove the level of knowledge of Spanish.

In Friesland the PABO (responsible for teacher training in primary education) has ‘Didactics of English’ in the curriculum, but does not train the English language skills per se. There are two types of further training: short courses in didactics (often offered by the publishers of the methods) and courses to improve the English language skills (for example: certificates in Cambridge in English), provided by different institutes. The Ministry of Education in the Netherlands is trying to impose the latter courses, but thus far without any

result. Frisian teaching qualification in primary education is the so called “*Frysk foech*”. Teacher training in Friesland offers this course in the curriculum. Teachers can also obtain the qualification afterwards, in a separate course.

Basque teachers older than 50 years received all of their education through Spanish because at the time there was no other option and when they started working they often wanted to do so through Basque. They were not required to have any specific training or qualification, although in later years they were asked to have the EGA certificate in order to continue teaching Basque and through the medium of Basque. One teacher explains: *“Basque mother tongue and Spanish at school. All my education was in Spanish. Spanish was easy to learn. Since I was in a Spanish medium of instruction boarding school, I forgot a little bit of Basque. Speaking was fine but reading and writing not. Magisteritza too was in Spanish, Basque was just a subject. When I started working it was in Basque.”* (EUS8) and *“We were not well prepared, it lacked everything. I did Magisteritza in Spanish and started working at the ikastola because I knew Basque and later on I took classes of Basque and got the EGA”* (EUS30).

An important consequence is that the Basque teachers hold more language certificates than the Frisian teachers. They are also required to hold a certificate of English proficiency to teach English. Language certificates are considered important in the Basque Country, while in Friesland teachers in general do not see certificates are very important; perhaps with as exception certain certificates for English.

4.4 Languages taught

Primary school teachers in both regions are grade teachers and that means that they teach most of the subjects, therefore, and although the aim of the study is to analyse the challenges and needs of language teachers in the multilingual classroom, it is important to bear in mind that in most cases, these teachers also teach other subjects such as math and science as well.

All interviewed teachers teach at least one language and most of them teach two or three languages. There is a big difference between the Basque and the Frisian teachers in this respect. While most Frisian teachers teach the minority language Frisian, the dominant language Dutch and the foreign language English, in contrast in the Basque Country few interviewees teach all three languages. It is more common in the Basque Country for a grade teacher (tutor in the Basque Country) to teach the minority and the dominant language and to have a separate teacher for English. One reason is that there are specific language qualification requirements, which are to have the *Magisteritza* diploma with foreign language specialization or a certificate that proves a B2 level in English. As told by the Basque teachers, the trend is changing; recently graduated teachers tend to have the English specialization in addition to the more general specialization and are thus qualified to teach the three languages as a subject and even through the medium of the three languages: *“The current teachers do not have a qualification in English but the new teachers that are coming*

do have that qualification, so they are tutor and English teacher at the same time." (EUS30). (A tutor, in most cases, teaches all subjects to his or her group).

One characteristic all teachers share is that none of them has received any formal pre-service training for bilingual education, neither in the Basque Country nor in Friesland. Although there are some who have received an in-service training course for multilingual education: *"We are getting training in the integrated language treatment"* (EUS7), or, *"I have been trained for the multilingual programme"* (EUS54) or, *"To become a trilingual school we had guidance by CEDIN"* (the school advisory centre) (FRY46).

As was mentioned in Chapter 2, duo-teaching is common in Friesland, a circumstance which has as a consequence that not all teachers teach three languages, because it is also common in Friesland to have language separation according to days or half-days. Thus for example, one morning can be the Frisian morning or the English morning. As one teacher explains the pattern at her school: *"Tuesdays and Thursdays are Frisian days on which we speak Frisian as much as possible; and there is one hour that we speak English, compulsory. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays we speak Dutch"* (FRY45). As a consequence some interviewees are not teaching Frisian, because they are not teaching on the Frisian morning, thus: *"My duo-colleague teaches Frisian"* (FRY34).

Chapter 5: The teaching of two or more languages

5.1. Language policy, language aims, and design of the language curriculum

Multilingualism in the schools of Friesland and the Basque Country is carefully planned. Most schools in the Basque Country and an increasing number in Friesland have implemented a multilingual programme in order to serve the needs of their pupils and the demands of society although, as four out of the five headmasters interviewed agree, multilingual education is not the top priority of the schools but: *“One of the priorities”* (EUS56) or at most: *“Number two in our priority list”* (EUS55).

5.1.1 Language policy

Although schools have a formal document that outlines its language policy or the school takes part in a multilingual programme, most interviewees in both regions do not seem to be aware of the details of the content of the policy, or sometimes even of the existence of a document. Some Frisian teachers reported not to know that there is a language policy in place and even when they were aware that there is a policy document, they do not know what its content is. So when they were asked about it they answered in terms of: *“I think there is”* (FRY37), or, *“I don’t know. It must be there, but I don’t know”* (FRY39), and: *“Language policy?! No, not that I know of (...) I assume there’s a rule that you should speak Dutch”* (FRY41). Their colleagues in the Basque Country are more aware of the language policy of the school and even if they do not know all the details, they know it is *“supportive of Basque”* (EUS1, EUS2, EUS3). These comments of the teachers confirm again the finding in previous reports (e.g. Arocena et al 2010) that the position of the minority language in the schools of each region is quite different. While the presence of the minority language in the Basque schools is strong, in Friesland this is not the case, because there Dutch is the dominant language and Frisian has a more marginal place in the curriculum. The importance of Basque in education can be demonstrated further by the circumstance that some schools in the Basque Country have applied for the so-called BIKAIN certificate. This is a general certificate given by the Basque Government to organisations to guarantee a high level of presence and use of the Basque language (see www.euskalit.net/bikain; in Spanish). There are also schools that have implemented the so-called ULIBARRI programme which is a programme for the normalisation of the use of Basque in the schools (see www.ulibarri.info; in Basque; and also Aldekoa and Gardner 2002). Despite differences between the Basque Country and Friesland, teachers in both regions seem to agree on the importance of a multilingual approach, for example they say: *“[we] are in favour of the three languages”* (EUS28) and they: *“Strive for a trilingual school”* (FRY35).

5.1.2 Language aims

The teachers were also questioned about the language aims of the school. The Frisian teachers remained somewhat vague about the language aims for the end of the primary education and they would answer for example: *"I don't know them by heart. I know there are there but that's it"* (FRY34). Despite this lack of precise and detailed knowledge, about half of the Frisian teachers clarified that they still achieve the language aims because as one explained: *"The method specifies the language aims, so if you follow the method, then you play safe"* (FRY39), his colleague said the same more implicitly: *"I follow the methods, and those meet the aims"* (FRY36). Thus, the teachers feel confident they are fulfilling the requirements of the school. In contrast, their colleagues in the Basque Country seem to be more explicit about what the language aims of the school are, even if not all of them to the same degree. In general, Basque teachers can verbalize the language aims for the end of secondary education and some also know the aims for the end of primary. If they cannot state specific aims, they are able to express it in general terms, so something teachers in both regions agree on is that pupils should be able to *"express themselves"* (FRY43) or *"communicate and get good comprehension"* (EUS1). When the headmasters in the Basque Country were asked if their teachers know what the language aims are, they seem hesitant: *"I think so"* (EUS52), or, *"I think they all know but I cannot be sure"* (EUS56).

5.1.3 Design of the language curriculum

Related to the language policy and language aims, is the design of the language curriculum, an important aspect of a multilingual school. In Frisian schools the headmaster in most cases designs the curriculum and in the Basque Country it is done by the Department of Education. Sometimes it can also be done by a group of teachers, but then always following the guidelines set by the Basque Government. In an Ikastola, as the Basque teachers working there confirmed, it is the umbrella organisation of *Ikastolen Elkarte* that designs the curriculum. However, the teachers in both regions seem to have some degree of autonomy in how they implement the curriculum and they can make adaptations where needed.

5.2. Language as a subject versus other subjects

As primary school teachers most of the teachers do teach all subjects, not only language as a subject. When these teachers were asked about the importance of language as a subject versus other subjects, most teachers believe that language and math are the most important subjects in schools. Some teachers added science to that list. In both regions teachers state that without languages it is not possible to learn any other subject, or, as one teacher says: *"language is important for every subject"* (FRY40). In spite of the importance given to

language for learning other subjects and the aim of the schools to have a multilingual programme, the languages are usually not integrated with other subjects. In Friesland most subjects are taught through the medium of the dominant language, Dutch and in the Basque Country most subjects are taught through the medium of the minority language, Basque. The other languages have some space in the curriculum but not necessarily as medium of instruction. One interviewed teacher in Friesland clarifies: *“A colleague of mine teaches history in Frisian but besides that, nothing”* (FRY36) and another teacher explains: *“We don’t use English and Frisian for other subjects”* (FRY37). In the Basque Country, it is more common to teach other subjects through the medium of Spanish or English, but usually just a few subjects and not even in all schools. The teachers put priority on serving the needs of their pupils, or as one of them explains: *“Because the language of our pupils is Basque, we noticed that they struggle in Spanish and so we decided to teach “arts and crafts” in Spanish”* (EUS6).

5.2.1 Teaching English

In the Basque Country some primary schools offer science and physical education through English, but others do not start until secondary with offering subjects through English. Some teachers mentioned that one unit of science in English has been incorporated in the textbook of *TXANELA*, which is a project created by the *Ikastolen Elkarte* that globalizes all subjects (languages, math, and social and natural sciences). The incorporation of a unit of science through English or teaching the whole course of science through English created a new challenge for the teachers and, of course, also the schools. That challenge is more obvious in the Basque Country than in Friesland where the same grade teacher usually teaches English as well and there are few special subject teachers of English. Therefore, they are not qualified to teach science and the science teachers are not qualified to teach English. In most cases the science teacher with (some) knowledge of English had to undertake the task of teaching her subject through English, but there are also cases in the Basque schools where the English teacher had to teach science. In any case this created a need for the English and the science teachers to work together, as one teacher remarked: *“It has obliged Basque science and English science (teachers) to get to an agreement”* (EUS7). Traditionally the English teacher did not work in collaboration with other teachers, according to one teacher: *“We do not have that type of communication with the English teacher”* (EUS9).

5.2.2 Coordination among teachers

To meet regularly with other teachers is an important part of the job of a teacher and collaboration among them is essential. In both regions, teachers meet at least once a week. It can be a full staff meeting, a cycle meeting or a grade meeting. Full staff meetings are usually about topics related to the school in general, such as management, festivals or

holidays: *“Children’s book week, Christmas projects”* (FRY41) or, *“What to do during the Durangoko Azoka”* [book market in Durango] (EUS22). Cycle and grade meetings are more specific to the curriculum where aspects of pupils’ progress are discussed. Teaching languages is not an important topic of discussion according to the teachers: *“Language is on the agenda now and then, just when there is something to discuss”* (FRY36), and *“In primary school we do not meet by subjects, so we do not have language meetings”* (EUS24). So, the teachers meet to discuss languages only when there is a real need to; of course, this does not exclude the possibility to informally discuss some things during breaks.

Because of the larger size of the schools recently in the Basque schools coordination, collaboration and communication among the teachers has come up as an important topic. Traditionally, tutors or grade teachers meet with other grade teachers of parallel groups to discuss issues related to the curriculum, but they do not meet with the specialized English language teacher because their meetings rarely deal with languages only, or, as one teacher says: *“We do not meet with the English teacher to talk about what we are doing and the planning of classes”* (EUS2). Grade teachers have come to realize that there are skills and concepts that are the same in all languages, but not all of them have taken the effort to include the English teacher in their discussions and decision making, or, as one teacher observes: *“Because I teach both Basque and Spanish I make links to each subject; I know what I have covered in one and in the other, so I try to make connections in the type of texts (...)With the English teacher we do comment on pupils’ progress but not about coordination of the subjects as we do with Basque and Spanish but because the English project is different”* (EUS6).

Some schools are convinced of the importance of an integrated treatment of all languages and they have asked staff members to attend a specific training course on the topic so that they can share what they learn with their colleagues: *“We have to unify the language teaching, there is a teacher who is getting trained at the BERRITZEGUNE”* (a training centre that offers a variety of in-service courses] (EUS10) and *“We want to work on ‘integrated language treatment’ and from now on, we do intend to have meetings with all language teachers together”* (EUS7). The teacher refers to a way of programming the languages in the curriculum that allows for the transfer of what is learned in one language to the other languages.

5.3 Language use practices

How languages are used, by whom, when and why is of course important in the setting of a multilingual school. In the case of the Basque and the Frisian schools, pupils are taking part in trilingual education and this circumstance can create special challenges for the (language) teachers. It is an important part of this study to investigate those challenges and how they originate from the use of three languages and to see what the relationships are among the languages.

5.3.1 General rules and norms

The participants in the school context control language use inside schools to a certain degree. The rules and norms can be different in every school but there are patterns that are similar. The teachers in both regions report that, as far as language use practices are concerned there are no formal written rules. The language used inside the classroom is not formally regulated.

Many teachers agree that the non-written rule is to use only one language of instruction for each lesson and inside the school and inside the classroom to use the general school language, which is Dutch in Friesland and Basque in the Basque Country. In Frisian schools the non-written rule is: *“Children have to speak Dutch at school”* (FRY41). In the Basque Country according to one teacher: *“The school does not have written rules, but we all know that we need to use Basque”* (EUS25). All Basque schools where the teachers were interviewed had at least D model instruction, and thus the language of school is predominately Basque. Although several schools also have A and B model instruction, Basque is the language expected to be used by the pupils when inside the school.

However, to maintain these informal language use rules is not always easy and the teachers see the consistent use of the languages as one of the challenges they face in multilingual schools. It is interesting to observe what really happens with language use inside and outside the classroom. In Friesland, once the teachers and pupils are in the hallways or in the school yard, outside the classroom, they tend to switch to Frisian among each other. This switching behaviour was confirmed by several teachers: *“Dutch in the classroom, Frisian in the school yard.”* (FRY38), or: *“Outside the classroom I speak Frisian if pupils speak Frisian to me, but inside the classroom I never speak Frisian.”* (FRY34) and simply: *“Outside school I use much more Frisian.”* (FRY42). At the same time it is not uncommon to continue in Dutch with a teacher. It depends often on what has become the habitual language use practice.

In the Basque country, on the other hand, most teachers use Basque inside and outside the classrooms; however, the English and Spanish teachers do switch to Basque when outside the classroom, as was explained by several teachers: *“English in the classroom and Basque in the hallways”* (English teacher, EUS1), or: *“In class I only use English and in the hallways, with teachers and pupils, (I speak) in Basque”* (English teacher, EUS5), and: *“Spanish in class and Basque in the hallways”* (teacher of Basque and Spanish, EUS25). One also relates it to identity: *“Being the Spanish teacher, since they know I am Basque, as soon as I leave the classroom they use Basque with me”* (teacher of Basque and Spanish EUS33).

The challenge for the teachers is related to the sociolinguistic context of the school. Depending on the amount of Frisian or Basque spoken in the surroundings, the teaching staff is more or less relaxed to allow pupils to use another language than the main language of the school. In Friesland, the use of Dutch or Frisian is dependent of the area where the school is located. For instance, in more Frisian speaking areas pupils and teachers tend to use more Frisian outside the classrooms and in informal situations: *“During the break they can speak Frisian, it is a relaxing moment”* (FRY43). Similarly, in Basque speaking areas, teachers report that *“We have no problems here with Basque”* (EUS5), and *“Comparing it to*

other schools, the situation of Basque in our school is good" (EUS13) in relation to pupils using or not using the Basque language. In other schools located in more Spanish speaking areas the situation is different: *"We cannot make them to use Basque outside the classroom"* (EUS18). In both regions it is seen as a challenge to make pupils use the language of the school outside the classroom: *"As soon as they leave the classroom, they change into Spanish"* (EUS10). Some teachers in the Basque Country have noticed a change over the last few years: *"The use of Basque has decreased; it is not the same in all groups"* (EUS18), or, *"When I started here, most pupils used Basque in school, and not only in the classrooms, nowadays, the use is very limited"* (EUS9).

The challenge is not only to make Spanish speaking pupils use Basque outside the classroom, as is apparently aimed for in some Spanish speaking areas, the teachers themselves also tend to be more easy-going, as a concerned teacher observes: *"In the last years, I think that the language policy, the use of Basque, is quite relaxed. (...) Nowadays, I hear more Spanish in the teachers' lounge, but the administrators' policy is in favour of Basque. I think it is because the sociolinguistic reality outside the school has not helped"* (EUS9).

During a lesson inside the classroom the language used is supposed to be the language of instruction. However, it seems that inside the Frisian classrooms the teachers are less strict in this sense than the Basque teachers. For example, it is common in Friesland to teach English or Frisian through the medium of Dutch and to allow pupils to answer in Dutch, while in the Basque Country, the Spanish language class is taught through the medium of Spanish and Spanish is the only language to be used during that time. Similarly inside the English language class the language of instruction is only English which both teachers and pupils are supposed to use. All other subjects are taught through the medium of Basque and then only Basque is allowed. However, it seems there are some subtle differences. The teachers seem stricter when demanding of the pupils to only use Basque or English than only Spanish. The reasoning is that they think that the pupils *"Will get Spanish [anyway]"* (EUS1) because it is all around, whereas Basque and English are languages the pupils use in many cases only at school. It can be observed that the separation of languages is more strictly applied in the Basque Country than in Friesland. As one teacher says: *"We do correct them if they use Spanish, they know they have to use Basque"*(EUS13) and a Frisian colleague states: *"They are allowed to use Dutch but they have to try (to use English)"* (FRY34).

5.3.2 Code-switching

Teachers more in the Basque Country than in Friesland try to separate the languages they teach. Still code-switching or language alternation does occur and during the interview the teachers were asked about the phenomenon. The question about their practices included a sub-question on whether they allowed pupils to alternate languages in class.

In a setting where pupils and teachers speak more than one language, code-switching is a phenomenon that is bound to happen. In the classrooms that were visited during the data collection process, several instances were observed in both regions. During the interviews teachers reported that code-switching frequently happens in their classroom and in a natural way. Although there are a few teachers who said that they do not allow their pupils to code-switch because they expect them to use only the language of instruction during the lesson time, all other teachers agree that they allow their pupils to code-switch. From time to time the teachers also correct them or encourage them to use the right form in the target language. Some examples of what was said in the interviews can be given: “*We do it naturally*” (EUS2), or, “*If a pupil responds in Basque in an English or Science class I repeat in English and encourage them to repeat in English, I would not tell him off*” (EUS7). One teacher states: “*I allow it and I do it myself*” (EUS12). She was observed during a Spanish language class doing the following switches between Basque and Spanish (*Basque is underlined*):

- Teacher: *¿Qué es? ¡Esan! [What is it? Say it!]*
- Teacher: Vale, ondo, orduan, en el texto...” [Ok, good, then, in the text...]

Another teacher explains: “*We do use a little of Basque in the Spanish class but very naturally*” (EUS23). During her Spanish language class the following observation was made: (*Basque is underlined*):

- Teacher: *Lo pones ahí txukun txukun. [Write it there very neatly]*
- Pupil: *Es una elkarrizketa. [It is a dialogue]*
- Teacher: *Sí, es un diálogo. [Yes, it is a dialogue]*

Also Frisian teachers report on code-switching, for example: “*They are allowed to do so now, but later in the school year I expect the pupils to use one and the same language.*” (FRY35), or: “*I do not have a problem with that*” (FRY39), and “*I try and encourage them (saying) ‘try again, try in English now’*” (FRY43).

All instances of code-switching observed during class time happened in a natural way and went by unnoticed by the teachers and the pupils. Neither the teachers nor the pupils feel uncomfortable when they alternate between languages and in most cases the switches are accepted as “*It is used to help them*” (EUS23). It is a resource multilingual speakers have to answer to their needs: “*Language is for communication, if you cannot communicate in one, you have another one you can communicate in, you know two languages*” (EUS6).

Together with code-switching, there are instances where borrowings from the other language are adapted to the currently used language. These phenomena are called “*Erderakadak*” (Spanish borrowings adapted to Basque), “*Euskerakadak*” (Basque borrowings adapted to Spanish), and “*Frisismes*” (Frisian borrowings into Dutch) and “*Hollandismen*” (Dutch borrowings into Frisian). Teachers tend to accept and use code-switching, but they often feel that these borrowings should not be accepted and therefore they correct them in most cases. Several instances of such borrowings and the corrections were noticed during the classroom observations:

- Observation in a Basque language lesson (*“erderakada”* underlined).
 - Pupil: *Erabili dezaket dikzionarixua? [May I use the dictionary (Spanish word=diccionario, “xua” is the local variety of Basque’s ending)]*
 - Teacher: *Zer da dikzionarixua? [What is “dictionary”?]*
 - Pupil: *Hiztegixa. [Dictionary (in Basque)]*
 -

A pupil uses an “erderakada” (Spanish loan) and the teacher corrects him by asking him to use the Basque word. Another observation is a similar.

- Observation in a Basque language lesson: (*“erderakada”* underlined).
 - Pupil: *Sonau egiten du! [it sounds familiar!]*
 - Teacher: *Sonau? Ezaguna egiten zaigu. [It sounds? It is familiar to us (proper way to say it in Basque. Explanation: “sonar” and the verb form used by the pupil are a literal translation from Spanish)]*

Again a pupil uses an “erderakada” and the teacher corrects him showing him the proper way to say it in Basque.

This use of “Frisismes” and more of “Hollandismen” also happens in the classrooms in Friesland. The teacher gave examples such as a pupil might use in Frisian the word “skaatsen” [to skate] instead of the correct Frisian form “reedriden”. In one occasion it was observed that a pupil said *“Waar komt dat weg?”* [“where does it come from”] which is a “Frisisme” because in Dutch the form would not be “weg” but “vandaan”.

Twelve out of 17 Frisian teachers say they “do not mind” if their pupils alternate languages or do not use the language of instruction at all times. Four teachers also say that they do correct the pupils if they use another language than the language of instruction. In the Basque Country in contrast, of the 29 teachers who answered this question almost all of them correct the pupils when they alternate languages, but 13 teachers emphasize that they do not correct the pupils all the time because: *“Otherwise the effect would be the opposite”* (EUS2), *“They would be quiet if we constantly corrected them”* (EUS3), *“They get tired”* (EUS10, EUS19), and *“If you correct them all the time they get embarrassed”* (EUS6). The Frisian teachers agree with them: *“I correct it but in a sympathetic way. They have to be motivated to speak English but when you are too hard on them they do not dare anymore* (FRY48) and a colleague adds: *“The first goal for English is improving their self esteem so I don’t focus to much on the switching”* (FRY40).

Most Basque teachers believe that correcting pupils constantly to use only one language can have a negative effect. One of the Frisian teachers agrees that it can even be harmful: *“When you force them to speak a language, they start to dislike it”* (FRY45). However, there are a few teachers who admit to correct the pupils all the time and others say that they “encourage” the pupils to use only the language of instruction. This could be observed during one of the lessons. The teacher who said: *“I encourage them to use English”* (EUS5) was observed in the following interaction.

- Observation in the English lesson of the same teacher:
 - Pupil: *Padelian lauek jolasten de.* [Four players play in paddle tennis]
 - Teacher: *In English?*
 - Pupil: *In paddle play four.*

About a third of the Basque teachers allow for alternation of languages and they admit that they do so themselves. A reason they provide is that it is natural and very rooted in the pupils and themselves. Further, because they believe it is a resource they have. For example alternation is used to clarify meaning or make themselves understood by the pupils: *“We do alternate in order to be understood”* (EUS17).

- Observation in a Spanish lesson of the same teacher:
 - Teacher: *“Ba dakizu zer dan zurcir? Si tu madre está cosiendo... hori da”*
[Basque is underlined and Spanish not: *Do you know what “to darn” is? If your mother is sewing... that’s what it is*]

In Friesland the teachers are emphasizing less to use English during the English lessons and most of them say they use it as a strategy. During the observations a lot of alternating between the languages could be observed.

For example:

- Observation in an English lesson:
 - Teacher: *Wat betekent ‘keep left’?* [What does ‘keep left’ mean?]
 - Pupil: *Ga zitten?* [Sit down?]
 - Teacher: *Nee, ‘keep’ is iets met ‘houden’.* *Wie weet het?* [No, ‘keep’ is something with keep. Who knows?]
 - Second pupil: *Links aanhouden!* [Keep left!]
 - Teacher: *Goed zo, ja, ‘keep left’ betekent ‘links aanhouden’.* [Very well, yes, keep left means keep left]

Here the teachers switches all the time between English and Dutch, for him it is part of the way he teaches English. He appeals to the other students for correct answers and he does only indirectly correct the pupils.

Another reason mentioned by several teachers is the “language identity” of a teacher, because pupils tend to identify each teacher with one language. For example: *“they identify me with Basque”* (EUS25) and for this teacher it is very hard to maintain the use of only Spanish in her class because she used to teach Basque before to the same group. Another teacher says that if one teacher teaches more than one language this can also be confusing for the pupils: *“They do get mixed a little when the same teacher teaches them two languages”* (EUS32). A Frisian teacher observes: *“Yes, I do that [=alternate languages] now and then. I don’t mind pupils doing it. I do say something about it when they’re just being lazy”* (FRY 47).

5.3.3 Translation

One of the challenges that language teachers face when using the target language is to make sure the pupils understand all the words and concepts. As was said above, mainly in the Basque Country but it is also present as a trend in Friesland, the teachers intend to separate languages. In general, they do not like to use any other language but the target language during their lessons, but for clarification they can switch languages. It is clear to teachers that their pupils and they themselves are multilinguals and that the knowledge of other languages is a resource that they can use. The Frisian teachers allow and use translation more often in their language classes, as several of them say *“It must be clear what it is we are discussing”* (FRY42) and *“Of course, you translate English words. They have to know what they are writing down. That is the point to improve vocabulary”* (FRY47).

When pupils find certain words, phrases, expressions or concepts difficult to understand, the teachers try using different techniques such as to rephrase, to give synonyms, antonyms or definitions, and in some cases even gestures and pictures in order to convey the meaning to the pupils. In general, teachers are not fond of simply using translation as their first resource. Once they realize that they do not succeed with the other techniques, only then they use translation. The following teachers confirm this: *“First try to use definitions or explanations though”* (EUS23) and *“Translation would be the last thing to do”* (EUS31).

In both regions it is clear that the teachers agree to not use translation as their first resource when the meaning of a word is not clear. However, only a few of them say that they never use it and the majority says that they do use translation if they have no other resource. Translation is not only used when there is an unknown word, it is also used *“In order to make sure they understand”* (FRY39) or to check on understanding as observed by the researchers during classroom observations:

- Observation of a Basque language lesson:
 - Teacher: *Zer da aqintea? [what is commandment?]*
 - Pupil: *mandato (Spanish) [commandment]*

- Observation of a Spanish language lesson:
 - Teacher: *¿Cuál es la finalidad, helburua, objetivo? [What is the aim, objective? (the teacher inserts the Basque equivalent between the two synonyms)]*

Similar observations exist for Friesland where teachers use translation as a teaching strategy and they also invite pupils to translate as in the following example.

- Observation of an English language lesson:
 - Teacher: *“What is in the second picture?”*
 - Pupil: *“Good afternoon”*
 - Teacher: *“What is afternoon?”*

- Pupil: “Middag”
- Teacher: “Yes, very good”

Teachers feel the need to use translation also in situations when there are immigrants who speak only one of the three of the school languages: “*With newcomers we do use translation (Spanish) or gestures*” (EUS20). In those cases, translation is also used as a tool to teach other languages, for example, as one English teacher in the Basque Country says “*There is a new arrival to whom I give the translation of the vocabulary in both Basque and Spanish because he does not know*” (EUS1). As this last example shows, teachers are able to transform a challenge into a learning opportunity.

5.3.4 Use of local varieties

The phenomena commented upon in this section seems to apply stronger in the Basque Country and less in Friesland, at least according to the interviews. In both regions the minority language, Frisian and Basque, has a standard variety and the languages also have many different local varieties. The use of those local varieties inside the school seems more evident in the Basque Country as an issue. There are local variants of Frisian in the different parts of Friesland. The differences are mainly in pronunciation, vocabulary and idioms. Some of the towns have their own dialect which is a mixture of Dutch and Frisian. Pupils in primary schools are usually not made aware of the local language varieties. In general the teachers use the standard Frisian in the Frisian lessons. For example children in the south-west part of Friesland can be surprised, if someone instead of the local variant ‘*dowe*’ says the word ‘*triuwe*’ (standard Frisian for “to push”). Language variation is not a topic for lessons in the school.

Since 1968, once the standardized Basque was accepted, schools implemented it in their instruction of the language and most instruction material is printed in standard Basque. However, during the lesson observations, it was noticed that there is a tendency to use the local variety for oral communication and the standardized when writing. The Basque teachers agree that the standard Basque is for formal situations such as written work and exams, and that for oral, informal communication the local variety of Basque is more adequate. Although, whatever variety the pupils use: “*It must be correct*” (EUS13). In one of the schools visited, there were posters in the corridors with the correct forms of certain sentences, focusing on the correctness of the verbs in the local variety. When the teachers were asked about this, they see a need to assist pupils with their local variety of Basque because they tend to use it with many errors. They thought that hanging the posters could be a good way to help the pupil.

A couple of schools that take part in this study are in the province of Bizkaia and at those schools knowing and using the local varieties correctly is important. They go as far as to use instructional textbooks in the Bizkaian variety instead of standard Basque. However, they cannot avoid using additional material in the standard variety because “*There are not*

many books in Bizkaian Basque” (EUS2) and “We are limited (when choosing textbooks) in Bizkaian Basque” (EUS8).

Another interesting instance of local usage is the differentiation a few teachers apply when they address specific pupils. The Basque language has two forms of address, the formal “zutanoa” (zu = you, the most common form of address in Basque) and the very informal “hitanoa” (hi = you) somewhat comparable to *vousvoyer* en *tutoyer* in French. A few teachers choose to use the informal “hitanoa” but only with limited number of pupils, or as one teacher reported: *“In many cases I use “zutanoa” with the whole group and “hitanoa” with certain individuals” (EUS17).*

One more interesting usage of the local variety is what a teacher answered when asked about using one language with the whole group and another with certain individuals: *“It is mainly between standard and local Basque; if there is someone who has learned Basque I will use standard Basque with that person” (EUS19).* This teacher originates from the same area where her school is located and therefore *“It depends on where I am that I will use one or the other form. In this school I try to use the local Basque but when I was teaching in Bizkaia I used standard Basque” (EUS19).* During the observations of the lessons prior to the interviews, it could be noticed that teachers who are not local tend to use standard Basque and not their own variety.

- Observation of a Basque language lesson; the pupils are writing a description of a person. Later on they will present the description orally to the whole class. Use of local forms is underlined.
 - Pupil: *“ule motza du eta altia da”* [she has short hair and she is tall] The pupil is asking the teacher whether he can say something like that and the teacher accepts it, but the teacher will probably correct him if he writes it this way.

5.4 Teaching methodology, resources, teaching activities and skills

The most common teaching methodology seems to be a textbook with extra photocopies and some other additional material. The teachers in both regions are similar in that they tend to follow a fixed method and, in most cases, add additional material where they see a need for the pupils. Most teachers in Friesland, when teaching Dutch and English, tend to follow the textbook and they add a few “*extra materials*” (FRY39), because: *“We have such a nice and complete method” (FRY37).* When teaching Frisian on the other hand, teachers say that they use a lot of photocopies and extra material since the textbook they follow is *“Only for spelling” (FRY37).*

In the Basque Country too, the teachers obviously follow a method but it is not always from a textbook, it can also be the school’s own method. The Basque teachers work either in a public school, an *Ikastola* or a *Kristau Eskola*. The *Ikastolen Elkartea* has its own material development department. It also has its own multilingual project and specific subject projects that the member schools of its network follow. The network of public schools has a multilingual project in place as well, with its own material. Two of the

participating public schools are members of the *Amara Berri network* which has its own didactic approach, in which they do not use any textbooks. The schools in the *Kristau Eskola* network do not all follow the same specific method but each school can choose its own. So taken together, the group of teachers interviewed for this study followed one of the following methods: for teaching Basque and Spanish either the method of a textbook or the Amara Berri method and for teaching English either the method of the multilingual project of the public school network, method of the *Ikastolen Elkarte* or methods in commercial textbooks. Regardless of which method they use, most teachers in the Basque Country, similar to their colleagues in Friesland, do use additional materials outside the textbook.

5.4.1 Teaching material

One of the most important differences between Friesland and the Basque Country is that there is much less teaching material available to teach Frisian than there is to teach Basque. Instructional material to teach through the medium of the minority language is scarce in Friesland while there is an abundant choice of materials in the Basque Country.

Therefore it is a challenge for teachers of Frisian to select a resourceful textbook. The teachers interviewed seemed all to have chosen *Studio F*, a method introduced in 2006, which is linked to the School TV with instructional TV programmes and its own website. It is the longest running resource to teach Frisian in primary schools and some teachers comment that “*The children don’t like it anymore*” (FRY45) and “*The appearance should be fresher*” (FRY45). In the Basque Country, on the other hand, there are many textbooks available to teach Basque in primary schools. Still, the textbook used by most teachers is *Txanela*, this is regardless of the type of school they work in. The two schools in the province of Bizkaia use *Ibaizabal*, because “*It is in the Bizkaian Basque*” (EUS8).

As far as the textbook to teach the dominant language is concerned, the availability and choice of textbooks for Dutch in Friesland is much larger and more varied than in the minority language. The textbooks most often mentioned to teach Dutch are *Taal in beeld*, *Spelling in beeld* for spelling, and *Nieuwsbegrip* for reading. Some other teachers use the textbooks *Taal op maat* and *Taalactief*. In the Basque Country, the most frequently used textbook for teaching Spanish is *Santillana*. Some teachers used for Spanish instruction also the textbook *Txanela*, because this is a project developed by the *Ikastolen Elkarte* that globalizes all subjects (languages, math, and social and natural sciences).

For teaching English, in both regions, there is an ample variety of textbooks on offer and the schools use different textbooks. For example in Friesland, the teachers mention *Real English*, *Team in Action*, *Take it Easy*, *Bubbles* and *Just do it*, which are all textbooks produced by different international publishers. In the Basque Country, the teachers in the public schools use the material called *INEBI* (Content based learning of English) included in their multilingual project and developed by the Basque Government. The teachers in the *Ikastola* network use the material in their *Eleanitz Proiektua* (multilingual project) and the

teachers in the private schools use textbooks such as *Up to you, English KET, Surprised* and *Sparks* again those are textbooks produced by a variety of international publishers.

Most teachers who were interviewed use additional materials when needed, usually photocopies from other textbooks or teaching material available on the internet: “*Also some copies for grammar*” (FRY41) and “*We add extra material, photocopies in general, in order to supply what the textbook lacks. We also use the internet, CDs, videos,...*” (EUS21).

5.4.2 Technology

Nowadays, textbooks are not the only teaching material used in schools, technology is also well implemented as a teaching and learning resource that is widely used by most teachers in both regions. Technology is used mainly as a supporting resource. A digital board and a computer are present in every classroom in the upper two grades of primary schools in the Basque Country, moreover, all pupils in those two grades have a laptop as part of the *Eskola 2.0* plan of the government (see www.eskola20.euskadi.net/web/guest/introduccion; in Spanish). Teachers usually include the digital boards in their instruction and pupil use their laptops as a notebook or to search for information in the internet. In Friesland, on the other hand, there is a long tradition of school radio and television. Today the teachers also use the internet and the school TV is still important because the method *Studio F* has links to both of them. They also use digital boards and all schools will have a number of computers or tablets, but there is no program for a laptop for every child. From August 2013 onward one primary school in Friesland decided to become a so called “Steve Jobs school”. On these schools every child gets its own tablet (an iPad) and the pupils work mainly with iPads instead of books.

During the observations of the language lessons, it was noticed that pupils in many cases used the internet to search for information that they would later use for a variety of reasons, such as to write a description of a famous person, to learn about a certain playwright, or to prepare an oral presentation for their science class. In the Basque Country, during those observations, it was noticed that pupils not always used the language of instruction or the target language when doing an internet search. During the interviews the teachers were asked about that phenomenon and their answers in general pointed out that they encourage them to do the search in the same language as the language of instruction because “*Translation requires more work*” (EUS20). Some teachers are aware that it is not always possible because there is more information available in Spanish than in Basque: “*If the quantity of information existing in Basque was the same as in Spanish, they would do it in Basque but there is more in Spanish and if they find it in Spanish they do not continue searching in Basque, they just translate*” (EUS6). However, according to one teacher pupils “*in the Basque class they search in Basque and in the Spanish (class) in Spanish*” (EUS9). The English teachers also encourage their pupils to search in English when are on the world wide web, because as one teacher says: “*They do search in English in the internet, because I ask them to do so*” (EUS26). Following the Basque schools’ language policy it was observed that

all computers and laptops are set up in Basque. Even if computers are commonly used in educational programmes in Friesland, all school computers are set up in Dutch and there is little information in Frisian available on the internet. To give an idea of the difference, there are about five times more pages on the Basque version of Wikipedia, (over 150.000 pages) than on the Frisian version (less than 30.000) (situation in August 2013).

5.4.3 Teaching activities and language skills

As will be clear by now in the Basque Country and in Friesland the three school languages are taught in similar ways. In both regions teachers use a whole range of resources for the instruction of the languages and they share some patterns and use similar teaching techniques.

One important pattern that all Basque and Frisian teachers share during their instruction is their aim to cover all four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) in (almost) every unit. It is clear from the classroom observations and the interviews that in current teaching methods those skills are covered. The methods for the most part use a text or short story as a basis or point of departure. Many instruction units start with a listening or reading episode and then follow with a variety of activities that cover practicing the four skills. Teachers like to say that they work around a project, which means that the unit is on a specific topic and its final objective is to create a presentation, either oral or written. As the teachers say *“They have to present, make a piece of work and thus achieve the core goals for reading, speaking, understanding and writing”* (FRY46), or: *“Within each unit there are opportunities to practise the four skills; first around a text, then speaking about previous knowledge, then reading, discussion about the reading, then writing about it. Each didactic unit practises all skills”* (EUS6), and: *“First presentation of the unit, read, discuss what the new project will be and how we will achieve its aims. There are texts to work with; rewrite, present...”* (EUS20).

A typical example of such a unit is the following excerpt from a classroom observation:

- Observation of science in an English class; the pupils have been working on a unit called *The Ecosystem* and the teacher starts the class reviewing orally the new vocabulary and the concepts learned in the previous lessons, then, together they read and discuss orally the comprehension of a text and finally the teacher introduces the final project which is an oral presentation using a power point presentation of an ecosystem of their choice. She provides pupils with a worksheet with guidelines and which the pupils have to follow when getting information from the internet and preparing their presentation for the next class.

Each language is not taught completely in the same way and even if there are similarities among the types of activities, there are differences related to what the pupils need. For example, the teaching of English, which is a foreign language in both regions, seems to be

more focused on oral comprehension and oral production. The activities tend to be more dynamic and include songs, short movies and games, among others. This could be observed in the classrooms and was also confirmed during the interviews. In contrast, teaching the minority and dominant languages is focused on more specific aspects, such as written production and correctness of grammar and spelling, but one teacher interpreted this as: *“It depends on the pupils’ needs”* (EUS6). Another fact about common teaching activities is that all Frisian and Basque teachers report that they do not use any translation exercises as an activity, as was done more often in the past.

Asked if they focus more on one skill than on the others, the teachers do not agree, although it seems that in English they focus most on oral communication, but for the minority and the dominant languages the teachers do not indicate clearly which skill gets more emphasis. One group of teachers says that the emphasis is more writing skills, another group mentions speaking skills and a similar number of teachers say that the emphasis is about the same on both skills.

The importance and correctness of rules and norms, especially spelling, is different for each language. Moreover, for the teachers in Friesland it is more important that the pupils use spelling and language norms correctly than for their colleagues in the Basque Country. Almost all Frisian teachers agree that the correctness of spelling and language norms are very important while about half of the teachers in the Basque Country see those aspects as important. The demands of correct use vary also according to which language is involved, because as the teachers state: *“We do not pay much attention to spelling in English, but in Basque more, their level is higher so it has more importance”* (EUS10) and *“Dutch spelling is very important and it is less important for Frisian and English”* (FRY38).

Spelling is, of course, not the only aspect covered in language learning during the last two grades of primary school; other aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and how to present and debate are also part of the teaching process. According to most Frisian and Basque teachers, they teach all those aspects in their schools. Only a few Basque teachers say that grammar is not covered much: *“The objective is comprehension and expression, then, reading and writing, we teach little grammar. They learn to speak correctly, but they might not know the grammatical names, that is (learned) in secondary (school), here it is correctness”* (EUS30). They do not focus on grammatical terminology, but to some extent they still teach grammar. Some Basque teachers mention that they do not go deep into those aspects since: *“They start to work a little bit with those language aspects in the 3rd cycle but they will do more in-depth in secondary school”* (EUS23).

The Frisian teachers are more specific about the differences in teaching the three languages: *“For English it’s more about learning the vocabulary and learning how to communicate. For Frisian they have to learn some grammar and spelling and to understand Frisian of course. For Dutch they have to learn a lot more”* (FRY34).

The Frisian and Basque teachers agree that in English the most difficult skill for their pupils is to learn to speak, followed by comprehension, both listening and reading, and then writing. In written production, some teachers state that spelling and using correct grammar are the main problems of pupils. On the other hand, as reported by teachers in both regions,

in the minority language the most difficult skills for their pupils to learn are more or less the same as for the majority language. However, the most problematic aspects are not the same in both regions. In Friesland the most difficult skill to learn in Frisian and Dutch is obviously writing, including correct spelling and declension of verb forms, whereas in the Basque Country even if pupils also struggle with writing in Basque and Spanish, there the teachers frequently mention speaking as well.

5.4.4 Correction techniques

In the teaching and learning process, correction is an essential aspect that teachers seem not to take lightly because *“A good correction is a learning opportunity”* (EUS21). The answers of the teachers regarding correction techniques are varied. They can be summarized as follows. The Frisian teachers focus on not discouraging the pupils, especially when correcting their spoken performance. Many Frisian teachers find encouragement to use the English language important: *“I will not correct each mistake, then they will get anxious”* (FRY39), or: *“When you bring it (up) positively, they dare to make mistakes and then they are really able to grow”* (FRY46) and: *“I avoid saying something is wrong. I do sometimes but you can also praise that they have tried, it gives them more self-confidence”* (FRY47). Many Frisian teachers also mention that they do not want to use the word “wrong”, they rather simply rephrase a “wrong” sentence and ask pupils to repeat it. The Frisian teachers do try to correct mistakes by using different techniques. This teacher gives an example: *“When someone makes a big mistake then I do mention it explicitly by saying ‘that’s not right’”* (FRY42). Another teacher uses more implicit techniques such as: *“After a speech we are always discussing the ‘pros and cons’. That is not meant to run someone down but it is meant to learn from it: what can be improved?”* (FRY36), and another technique is: *“By saying ‘who knows another word for this?’”* (FRY38). The Frisian teachers focus on oral language when discussing correction and they always value the moment when it is most suitable to do so.

The Basque teachers all agree that they do use *“many different techniques”* (EUS4) for correction, but in contrast to the Frisian teachers they focus on written production. They mention some specific techniques to correct mistakes. According to their answers in the interviews and the observations of their lessons, these teachers do not use *“Correct at home and afterwards return the written work of the pupils to them”* (EUS8). The reason is that they see doing corrections in the classroom together with the pupils as an important learning process. As one teacher says: *“I do not correct at home anymore, it does not work”* (EUS6) and another teacher underlines that idea: *“If they participate in the correction they learn more, if the teacher corrects directly they do not pay attention to it”* (EUS24). According to the Basque teachers, the pupils can also do the correction themselves and working in groups or in pairs they can correct each other’s work. At other times, a teacher can make a list of the most frequent mistakes and then goes over those with the whole group. Another technique used by these teachers is underlining or circling the mistakes and asking pupils to

correct themselves, by rephrasing or reformulating, and asking the pupils to rewrite or copy the words/sentences correctly.

As was mentioned before technology has a strong presence in the two upper levels of primary school. The teachers use also the technology for correction purposes as several Basque teachers commented: *“I do correction in class, using the computer and projecting on the board for everybody to see”* (EUS6), or: *“I collect all essays and I make a list of all the mistakes and then projected to the whole class and correct them together as a class”* (EUS7) and: *“sometimes (I correct) with the projector”* (EUS16).

During the classroom observations of Basque teachers who were interviewed, a variety of correction moments were recognized. Most of those were related to orthography and spelling but there were some other instances too.

- Observation of teacher in an English language class: Pupils are doing individual presentations on a topic of their own choice. One particular pupil is talking about his experience in a summer camp and eventually mixes the verb tenses:
 - Pupil: *“Last summer, I go to...”*
 - Teacher: *“Last summer, is it ‘I go’ or...?”*
 - Pupil: *“I went”*.

- Observation of teacher in a Spanish language class: the pupils are doing corrections and the teacher notices that many pupils have misspelled the word “arpa” [harp] and she explains on the board that:
 - *“arpa” [harp] without an H is in Spanish and “harpa” [harp] with an H is in Basque.*

In both regions, however, there is at least one teacher who answered that he/she does like to use the technique of direct correction and they do it on the spot. But in general it seems that teachers prefer group correction and involvement of the pupils themselves since they see it as more effective.

5.4.5 Awareness of other languages

Awareness of the situation of languages in the world is something the teachers in both Friesland and the Basque Country do talk about in their classrooms from time to time. Only a few of the teachers in both regions say that they never teach anything about the situation of other languages, but all others do. Some teacher give a banal reason because: *“It is a topic in the lesson [of the book]”* (FRY40) and *“There is a unit in the textbook”* (EUS12), but many others emphasize that they want their pupils to be proud of the minority language they speak and because: *“We have to watch it, it’s our own language”* (FRY43) and *“They need to speak in Basque, we are the ones who have to do it”* (EUS9).

There are a few schools that participate in exchange programmes with other European schools and the advantage is that their pupils also learn more about other languages and related cultures. A Frisian teacher gives an example: *"We had an exchange programme every two years with Poland and some people from Estonia have just visited us"* (FRY45) and in the Basque Country one school participates in the 'COMENIUS: Europe in the Classroom' programme, which is part of the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme, called the Comenius actions (see http://ec.europa.eu/education/comenius/what_en.htm). Its aim is to help young people and educational staff better understand the range of European cultures, languages and values. A teacher from this school says: *"People from the Comenius project were here and it was very interesting"* (EUS29).

5.5 Language testing and reporting

Report cards are the most common way to inform parents about their children's learning progress and achievements in both Friesland and the Basque Country. In both regions, report cards are sent home at the end of each assessment period.

According to the Frisian teachers, it is common to test their pupils' progress with different exams. There is the 'CITO-exam' twice per year in grade 8 (final year of their primary education) which is an independent assessment of the final year for primary school pupils all over the Netherlands. Plus there is a variety of smaller tests to measure their knowledge on spelling, vocabulary, comprehension, etc which is the common procedure to assess their progress in Dutch. As far as their progress in Frisian is concerned, it depends on the teacher and the school. Some teachers gave the information that they do not have any exams in Frisian and others use the so-called 'Afûk-exam', a special exam for Frisian organized by the Afûk, an organisation that organizes languages courses and publishes Frisian books and learning materials. The teachers report about testing of progress in English that they use mainly the exams that go with the method.

Most of the Basque teachers report that the assessment they do is continuous and that it is not based only on one or two exams. They agree that exams are used, but mainly *"for parents"* (EUS24). The main way to assess pupils' progress is by doing in a continuous manner: *"We evaluate their continuous progress, they sometimes perform differently during the exam so it is important to measure the continuous progress"* (EUS14). This idea of performing differently in exams is shared by several teachers: *"You cannot assess a pupils' knowledge just with a test; conditions affect the pupil's performance"* (EUS33) and even one Frisian teacher says the same about exams: *"They get scared and they let themselves down with those official tests"* (FRY36).

The Frisian and Basque teachers use tests that are usually in the language that is being tested. The only difference between Frisian teachers and Basque teachers is that some teachers in Friesland use some Dutch in their English tests, because it is already included in the test as it is included with the method. As one teacher explains: *"Both in English and in Dutch; sometimes the instruction is in English and the difficult words are translated into*

Dutch” (FRY39) and: *“I use the test of the method. These use bilingual questions”* (FRY40). As far as allowing pupils to use another language than the language of the test, the teachers are stricter and in both regions they say they will not allow answers in any other language. It is interesting to note, that many teachers were quite surprised when they were asked about this possibility and many of them said they had never thought about it and it would never happen that a pupil answers in a different language than the language being tested in. On the other hand, a few Frisian teachers answered that they would not consider it completely wrong because the pupils had understood the task or question.

In both regions according to the interviews, teachers consult and discuss with their colleagues the progress of the pupils before assigning a grade in the report card. In Friesland, since in most cases teachers are part-timers and share the teaching of a group with a duo-teacher, it is a necessity to do so. In both regions the tutor of a group needs to discuss with the teachers of other subjects, such as English, Music or Physical Education, the progress of the pupils in order to correctly assess the pupils.

The answers of the teachers seem to indicate that the Frisian teachers are keener on the official tests and computer programmes to track the pupils’ progress than their colleagues in the Basque Country. When a teacher was asked how to carry out quality control of the progress of an individual pupil, Frisian teachers would reply that they take official tests and use different tracking systems:

- FRY40: *“We use Parnassys and the CITO pupil tracking system”*
- FRY47: *“You have to keep track of the test scores in a computer programme and you have Dotcom where all CITO scores are kept”*

The answers of their Basque colleagues were rather different:

- EUS10: *“Quality progress control is done in a continuous manner”*
- EUS11: *“With daily evaluation”*
- EUS32: *“Everyday work”*

One Basque teacher says that exams are important to evaluate pupils’ progress and another even says that there should probably have *“An official examination”* (EUS12). But then on the other hand there is also a teacher who says: *“I believe we need to get rid of the exams; end of period exams do not show their progress, it needs to be done continuously every day”* (EUS7). So, Basque teachers believe in continuous assessment of the children through their every day work, while the Frisian teachers believe in having good computer programmes and official exams to control their pupils’ progress.

Chapter 6: Teacher's beliefs about languages

The central part of the interviews consisted of questions about beliefs about languages of the teachers. Questions were asked to give their opinion, among others, about the goals of language learning and the levels they think should be achieved by the pupils. Also, if it was the aim to become native, so a Frisian speaking child would sound as an average Dutch child and also can write equally well as the average Dutch child outside Friesland; the same for Basque children to sound and write similar to Spanish children outside the Basque Country. This question is closely related to another question about the importance of being fluent and sounding natural. Other questions regarded the use of Frisian as medium of instruction (if the teachers do use it and how they feel about it), and the same for English. The teachers were also asked to give their opinion on codeswitching by the children and by themselves. Further, they were asked to rank-order the importance of each of the language skills: which is the most important listening, speaking, reading or writing (for each of the three languages)? The answers to these questions will be described in this chapter. Again the emphasis is on quoting frequently from the interview protocols so that the teachers can be heard and have a voice in this report (even if in translation into English).

6.1 Ideas about language learning

6.1.1 Goals of language learning

This part of the interview started off with a question on their opinion about the goals of language learning: what is ideally the level to be obtained for each language? Is the aim to be native? The question was explained further by asking if a Frisian speaking child should sound the same as the average Dutch child outside Friesland and can also write equal to an average Dutch child (and in the Basque Country that the aim for a Basque speaking child is to sound as an average Spanish child from outside the Basque Country).

Looking at the answers to these questions the first impression is that the teachers disagree a lot among each other, because 30 out of 51 respondents started their answer positive with "yes" or "that would be good" and the 21 other started with a negative answer, for example, "nobody gets a native level" (EUS10). However, upon closer inspection it turns out that most of the teachers qualify their initial answer further and it seems that they agree in many ways.

A positive answer would often be followed by a clarification along the lines of "That would be best" (EUS1), "Aiming for it is always good" (FRY42), or "[Of course] pupils need to master both Basque and Spanish very well" (EUS7). A negative answer would be qualified as "No, languages are for communicating, so they should get a communicative level" (EUS6) and "Enough to communicate" (EUS12).

Even if for many teachers the 'native speaker' is some kind of ideal, there seems to

be an underlying agreement that in reality it is not possible or at least very hard to achieve that level. The aim of nativeness was for example expressed as *“That would be great, but it is not possible in all cases”* (EUS14) and *“I do not think we will get that, it is ideal, I would like it, but I do not think we will get that level”* (EUS53). Also another Basque teacher uses almost the same words *“We should get that level, it would be ideal, but I do not think it is that way”* (EUS22) and then she reflects on her own skills and adds *“I do not have the same level in Spanish as I do in Basque”*. This is a thought probably shared by many other teachers.

In general, the Basque teachers see it as an aim for their pupils to become bilingual in Basque and Spanish at a high level, but that does not necessarily imply complete equality. Looking at the aim for learning English, many teachers add a further qualification. A few may say that *“We should aim at that level in each language, not just in Spanish, also in English”* (EUS24), but others point to a difference and they use the levels of the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for languages) to make it clear: *“In English, our aim, when they reach Batxilergoa (end of secondary school), is that they are B2. If someone gets a C1 because their parents invest in sending them to English classes in the summer and other courses, it is fine”* (EUS54). This level is lower than what they aim at in the other two languages, because as the same teacher adds *“There is no accreditation in Spanish but in Basque it would be the EGA level”* (EUS54) (EGA for Basque is officially seen equivalent to C1 of the CEFR, but could probably even be considered C2).

Many Frisian teachers believe that the goal of language learning should be the level of a native speaker. Several just answer the question in the affirmative by saying simply *“yes”* (FRY40, FRY41, FRY44, FRY46, and FRY48). Some others clarify their answers further. It can be seen as remarkable that several teachers are not very explicit about the level they want to achieve, because they may say: *“I don’t know, I just follow the method and do what I have to do”* (FRY38) or *“The level of the method”* (FRY47). One teacher answers in a similar way and reports at the same time that the level for Frisian is low: *“I don’t know, it is in the method. Frisian has always been weak at this school. Children who are Frisian don’t learn anything from it and those who are not Frisian do not learn either”* (FRY40).

It is taken for granted that the level to obtain in Dutch is higher than that of Frisian. Many teachers may answer something like: *“Dutch is the main language, Frisian is just extra”* (FRY39), *“They should learn correct Dutch”* (FRY47) or, *“For Frisian it is enough for me when they understand it a bit”* (FRY48). One emphasizes: *“At the trilingual school Dutch still has an important place”* (FRY46). Another simply answers about the levels to be achieved for all languages *“The compulsory end goals.”* (FRY41).

For English the Frisian teachers refer to the method and only one teacher explains in more detail *“you should be able to introduce yourself in English, you should be able to describe yourself, you should be able to ask for something in a shop, to order something in a restaurant, count from 1 to 20, know the months of the year, how to read the time. Just the basic knowledge, not only passive but also active”* (FRY37).

The answers demonstrate a major difference between the Basque and the Frisian teachers. The Basque teachers want their pupils to get a high level in both the minority and the dominant language, whereas the Frisian teachers give priority to Dutch and aim less high

for Frisian and also do not seem to aim very high for English. This is a basic divergence among these two groups of teachers and the importance given to the languages will also be reflected in other answers later on.

6.1.2 Advantages and disadvantages of multilingualism

During the interviews, the teachers were also asked to give their opinion about the advantages and disadvantages of multilingualism. As could be expected, most teachers are positive about multilingualism. In different ways the advantages were repeated many times and only a few teachers expressed some doubts or mentioned disadvantages of multilingualism. Perhaps the next teacher verbalizes a general held opinion well, when she says *“I am very happy with multilingualism. The more languages you know the better. I do not see any disadvantages”* (EUS2, also EUS6, EUS8, EUS19, FRY35, FRY41).

More specific advantages that were mentioned are among others, *“More options to communicate, more opportunities to get to know another culture”* (EUS 9, EUS11), or, *“It opens the world”* (EUS24). Similar formulations include *“it gives you the opportunity (...) to get in touch with others”* (EUS24), and [knowing languages is good] *“to travel, to communicate, to study”*(EUS32). It can also be said in a more personal way as *“multilingualism (...) opens you up as a person”* (EUS5).

Sometimes a relationship of multilingualism with intelligence was mentioned, when someone states *“It is good for the brain”* (EUS13) or, in similar vein [you become more] *“clever, because you are able to read two books”* (EUS9). A Frisian teacher hints at the same when she says *“Children get more flexible because of trilingual education”* (FRY46). Other teachers refer to relationships between languages as an advantage of multilingualism, for example, that you get *“better skills in languages”* (EUS11) or in similar vein, that you are able *“to pass along the skills you have in one language into another, so you will use the three languages well”* (EUS12). One teacher is convinced that *“They [the pupils] are able to express themselves better in different languages”* (FRY36).

Also the socio-economic aspect as an advantage of multilingualism is brought up. This is the case when a teacher says *“[Multilingualism] brings you much further in life compared to when you only speak Dutch”* (FRY37) or, as her Basque colleague formulates it *“To be multilingual gives you many opportunities”* (EUS20).

However, not all is good and some disadvantages also get mentioned, if only a few. One teacher sees as a disadvantage *“To learn a language requires taking time off another language”* (EUS3), or, a colleague says it in similar words *“It is not bad but it requires a lot of effort”* (EUS24), and, again, in just slightly different words *“The third [language] becomes harder, we struggle, you need time”* (EUS32). A related but slightly different disadvantage, if it is really one, is formulated as *“Disadvantages? Mainly that it is difficult to achieve the highest level in all languages”* (EUS28). Along those lines, in relation to the quality of language, the following teacher is uncertain and she expresses this as *“sometimes I have doubts; how well do they master their mother tongue first and then their second and third*

[languages]? I do not know... I have doubts" (EUS33). A Frisian colleague says: "I know from the books that it's good to raise your children bilingual, as long as you stay consequently with your language. So you have to be consequent" (FRY39), which reflects a widely held idea about how to raise a child bilingually.

There was one further interesting observation about multilingualism as a good thing, but with possible negative outcomes by one of the Basque teachers, who says "Yes, knowing a language gives you wealth, the ability to change from one to another is also good. But at this moment it is not realistic. Our pupils do not learn well either of the languages" (EUS22). She mentions changing between languages, but then she is concerned that her pupils will not acquire any of the languages at a sufficient level.

Some teachers focus on education itself when they answer the question on advantages and disadvantages of multilingualism. A Frisian teacher sees as "A drawback of multilingual education that not all methods are aimed at trilingual education" (FRY35). Another Frisian teacher also emphasizes this side: "The disadvantage of multilingual education is: it is very much in the beginning stages, we still have to look for the right form" (FRY45). This idea is shared by a Basque teacher who says "I think we have to take further steps in order to establish multilingualism, it is too early in multilingualism" (EUS15). These teachers seem to agree that since multilingualism is a relatively new thing in the schools, the appropriate format for the pupils to achieve a high level of proficiency, has to be developed further. The idea is to have a stronger multilingual programme as a possible solution. One of her colleagues focuses also on education, and she is positive: "I look at multilingual education positively. I don't think it will cause problems and even so, they can be solved" (FRY42). This awareness can be an incentive for policy makers, advisors and method developers to continue their efforts to improve multilingual education.

The primary schools in the Basque Country and in Friesland introduced the teaching of English as a foreign language some time ago, but then the introduction was not part of a multilingual programme. Most schools in the Basque Country have introduced English at pre-primary level; therefore children at four years of age receive English instruction. There was no explicit question on the early introduction of English in the interviews, but several interviewees mentioned it and their opinions are worth noting. For example, some teachers do not see a problem to start early with English: "That is not a problem. The level in English is lower than in the other two languages" (EUS18) and she also points out that "the [pupils] do get extra help outside, for example in language academies..." (EUS18). A Frisian teacher is in favour of starting young too: "I do think at a slightly younger age would be better" (FRY45).

Some other teachers who gave their opinion on 'early English' show a different point of view. A Basque teacher points to the strong influence of the parents and is critical: "[An early start with English] is very attractive for parents, because they say their children know three languages, but actually they know none. It is for attracting parents to enrol their children (...) it is an elitist matter" (EUS22). One of the headmasters says "As far as what I have read, it is questionable how good it is to introduce a third language when there are two other languages that have not yet been internalized by the pupils. It is confusing, but the pressure is huge. Parents say that children are like sponges 'the sooner the better, they learn

everything' but this is not the case. It is more the marketing done by schools than anything else" (EUS52). Another teacher adds to this idea of using languages as marketing tool: *"You need to sell it [languages] and the first thing that sells is English. Basque here does not sell, so we had to invest a lot of time on English"* (EUS10).

Society in general and parents in particular seem to demand of schools the teaching of English at a young age based on a belief that an early start facilitates learning. One therefore might think that schools have used the early introduction of English as a selling point to attract parents when they choose where to enrol their child. The headmasters were explicitly asked if that was indeed the case, but two of them deny clearly *"I do not think that is a distinctive aspect of this school. That is not the reason for them to come to this school"* (EUS54) and *"We do not use anything here to attract more pupils since this is the only school in town"* (EUS55). A third headmaster starts to say that it is not their case either, but then she qualifies her answer somewhat *"No, not specially, but it is true that during the enrolment campaign, the parents coming from other places demand such services, or at least they ask about when we start with and how we teach English"* (EUS56). Another headmaster seems more neutral *"We are [just] told that we need to start teaching English at age four and we do it"* (EUS53). The other headmaster deviates from the others and does believe that it is a selling point: *"I think that in the Basque educational system that has been done [to attract parents]. Parents have told me that they have enrolled children in certain schools because they learn three languages; that it is just marketing"* (EUS52).

From these interviews it becomes clear that the demand from parents (and from society) to give an early start to English is felt as very strong by the schools.

6.2 Outside influences on the learning of languages

6.2.1 Influence of parents

The preceding section mentioned already the influence of parents on the learning of English, but the teachers were also asked to give their opinion about the influence of the parents more in general. As can probably be expected, the Frisian and Basque teachers, without any exception, agree that parents do have an important general influence on the children.

The teachers mention various aspects. In very general terms, for example, one teacher says: *"The parents completely influence their children at this age."* (EUS14). It has to be remembered that these are pupils toward the end of primary school. More or less the same idea is expressed by a colleague when she remarks *"The way the pupils think is a reflection of what the parents think"* (EUS15). A Frisian teacher points to possible negative consequences of this influence when she remarks *"There's influence [of the parents] and you can hear the children say: I don't have to do that, because my parents told me so"* (FRY41). One Basque teacher even draws the conclusion: *"The parents have more influence than we do"* (EUS28). It is an opinion which was not uttered in the same words by other teachers, but

it seems like a feeling shared by many.

One of the Basque teachers points to the modern day circumstances where both parents work and as a consequence they do participate less in the daily lives of their children and they communicate little with them. Yet at the same time the parents have an important influence because they send them to extracurricular classes, sports, etc. (EUS27). A Frisian teacher turns the issue around and points to the importance of the relationship with the parents for his own work: *"[The influence is] very important, that is why the talks with the parents are important. They need to know what is going on"* (FRY43). In similar vein, but in more specific terms one teacher refers to homework as an issue *"It is important that they work at home and it is necessary that parents make sure that they work at home"* (EUS1).

The absence of reading as a habit is a concern shared by many teachers in both regions: *"Home is important. When pupils don't read a lot it is often a reflection from the parents"* (FRY42). Not only discussing the role of the parents, but at different moments in the interviews the importance of reading and the lack of practice comes up (it will also come back later in this report). The issue can be summarized as follows: *"They need to read more"* (EUS30).

The teachers also feel the influence of the parents through the language attitudes the children acquire from their parents and which they carry with them to the school. One teacher observes *"It is necessary to have a positive attitude, not just towards Basque but towards any subject"* (EUS24). Other teachers refer in more specific terms to learning languages and the consequences of the influence of the parents on the children. One of the teachers simply says *"The parents' attitude towards a language influences the pupils' attitude"* (EUS21). The language attitudes of the parents are different for different school languages, as the teachers have experienced. The desire for English was already mentioned before. The attitude of the parents towards English is for the Basque teachers an important element of parental influence. As one teacher states *"Parents really want English"* (EUS29). Several Basque teachers confirm that opinion and some of them compare it to other subjects, as can be illustrated by this comment: *"The parents are very much interested in their children learning English, English for them is more important than math"* (EUS5). Basque teachers also frequently mention the English language academies and private lessons that the children are enrolled in by their parents (EUS2, EUS9, EUS17, EUS19, EUS23, and EUS26). For the teachers this behaviour demonstrates how important English is for the parents, or, as one formulates it *"Parents are ready to do anything for their children to learn English, such as after school sending them to academies"* (EUS7). The phenomenon of English language academies and private lessons does not exist in Friesland, and is thus not mentioned by the Frisian teachers. Yet, similar to the Basque parents, Frisian parents also value English highly. One example is that their children go to a trilingual school: *"Parents are positive about the trilingual school, especially because of English"* (FRY35).

Interestingly, the way English is taught is not always appreciated by the parents, at least that seems to be what some teachers have experienced in the Basque Country: *"The parents question the methodology because current parents are from a very grammar oriented and academic English, so they are concerned about Science in English, they had*

many doubts until they saw the programme was implemented” (EUS7). A colleague observes: *“In the case of English [the parents want] more and more every time, Science is in English but some are not very convinced yet”* (EUS33).

The parents value the learning of English and Basque differently according to some teachers: *“The reaction was different towards Basque and English; English is better accepted because it is a world language while Basque is just local”* (EUS14, EUS16). In more negative terms one teacher formulates it as *“Some parents have told me that they do not care if their children are doing bad in Basque they find it more important to learn English”* (EUS19; also EUS10). It is hard to know how widely shared this opinion is given the general importance given to Basque.

Parents not only compare English to Basque, but they also compare Basque to Spanish: *“If the parents come from a Spanish environment and enter in a D model school, their reaction is decisive. (...) there are still parents living here who complain about the “Basquisition” of their children, (...) they do not see that need. The child will still show the strong presence of Spanish in his household even after many years”* (EUS7). Probably this is more an exceptional case because over 70% of the parents choose the D model for their children. Other teachers notice the negative influence of parents in this regard: *“At school Basque, but outside not (...) some children use Spanish, we encourage them to use Basque, but their parents do not encourage them to use Basque outside the classrooms”* (EUS13). The teachers sometimes seem to feel powerless: *“If the parents only speak Spanish with their children, they will keep using only Spanish. Parents decide what language their children will use”* (EUS28). Or, in a more balanced manner *“Some parents were grateful for the use of Basque and others were against it, which is representative of society”* (EUS15).

In Friesland similar unbalanced attitudes about the value of English (high) and Frisian (low) are expressed. One teacher says: *“Parents, who are positive about English, show this. Parents who are positive about Frisian, don’t show this”* (FRY35). The attitude toward Frisian can be rather negative because: *“Parents have an important role in the appreciation of Frisian. Children don’t like it, think it is unimportant. That is something they are told at home”* (FRY40). These opinions are also a reflection of more general attitudes in society, where Frisian is valued positively but where language policy, including for education, is moderately weak.

In conclusion, it can be said that in both regions the teachers believe that parents have a lot of influence on their children, more in particular also on the learning of languages and that the language attitudes of their children are a reflection of the parents’ attitudes.

6.2.2 Influence of television and social networks

Besides the parents there are other sources of influence on the language learning process of the pupils. Society in general and more in particular television, technology or computer games are other sources of influence in the surroundings of the pupils. The teachers were also asked to give their opinion on the importance of the influence of those sources.

In the Basque Country there are two television channels through Basque and numerous channels in Spanish. There are several programs for children, some in Basque and many in Spanish. With few exceptions programs that were originally in English, for example American series or movies, are dubbed into Basque (and on other channels into Spanish), only in some digital broadcasts the original sound can be made available. Most of the teachers are convinced that television has a strong influence on children at this age. The Basque teachers point to the shift of interest in children at around 12-13 years of age: *“The influence from TV is huge. When they are little they watch the Basque TV but when they reach the age of 12-13, they choose other more attractive channels which are in Spanish”* (EUS13). Another teacher comments *“They watch TV in Spanish because there are no attractive programmes for them in Basque”* (EUS17). One of the teachers is also aware of this circumstance, but is she hopeful because she remarks *“I think the Basque TV will see what is happening, that there is a gap, and they will make a change”* (EUS19).

In Friesland there is only one channel through Frisian and on that channel few programs are for children of primary school age. The other channels in the Netherlands broadcast either in Dutch or with the original sound in English with subtitles in Dutch. Where Basque teachers point to the influence of television programmes on the use of Spanish by the children, the Frisian teachers are equally convinced of the strong influence of television (and popular music) on the knowledge of English: *“The pupils already know a lot of English words because they watch English television programmes and because they listen to English songs on the radio”* (FRY34).

Today, due to the internet and social networks such as Facebook also are influential. They also shape the pupils’ language use and thus their language learning process, which may have an effect on their knowledge and use of Spanish, but also of Basque. One Basque teacher observes: *“Those [pupils] in 5th and 6th grades do use them [social networks]. There they use Spanish mainly but are using Basque more and more [in social networks]”* (EUS33). The Frisian teachers again focus on how new technology and social networks influence the learning of English. They mention, among others, the influence of computer games in English. One teacher has firsthand experience: *“I have some boys in the classroom who play a lot of computer games at home... they are far better at English than the other pupils. You immediately hear the difference”* (FRY39). Teachers also point to society more in general as a *“daily environment: magazines, shop-posters, etc are full of English words”* (FRY38).

In summary, looking at the influence of society in general, including television, internet, social networks and computer games, the responses of the Basque teachers were more along the lines of the influences on the learning of Spanish and some also mention Basque. Their Frisian colleagues focused more on the influence on the learning of English. The general differences in society concerning the three languages can be held responsible for these differences in perceptions and experiences. The minority language Basque has a stronger presence on television, internet and social media than Frisian. In contrast English does have a modest presence in Basque society, but can be heard and seen in Friesland in many places. The dominant languages Spanish and Dutch are both reinforced by the old and the new media.

6.3 Medium of instruction

6.3.1 Teaching through the minority language

The question on the use of the minority language as a medium of instruction was answered quite differently in the Basque Country and in Friesland. The main difference is that the Basque teachers in general have a positive opinion about the use of the minority language, while the Frisian teachers show reactions which, with some variation, all point to negative ideas on the use of the minority language for teaching. This result cannot be a surprise because the situation for teaching Basque and Frisian is completely different, almost the opposite. Nowadays Basque is the main language of education in the Basque Country, but Dutch is the main language in Friesland and Frisian has only a minor place (see also chapter 2).

In what follows, different shades of opinion that were found in the Basque Country and in Friesland will be presented. The opinions can be arranged on a continuum from more negative opinions that observe obstacles for the use of the minority language, via opinions that view the teaching of the minority language as positive only in some circumstances, to other opinions outspoken in favour, which do not question the use of the minority language and take it for granted.

Not a single Basque teacher who was interviewed looked negatively upon the use of the minority language, whereas among the 19 teachers in Friesland the opinions are more diverse. Only one teacher seems to be outspoken against Frisian as a medium of instruction *“No, I am not in favour of it”* (FRY44), but all of his colleagues qualify their answers in different ways and none of them says plainly *“it is good”* or *“it is normal”*. In the case of the Basque teachers that is a common answer. They give outspoken positive opinions in which they emphasize that *“it is good”* (EUS1, 2, 5, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17, 19, 26, 28, 56, 53) or similar words like *“natural”* (EUS15) or *“it should be like that here”* (EUS24) or referring to the context *“everything is in Basque here”* (EUS23). Other teachers may add an observation like *“I think it is good to push Basque (...) they will get Spanish on their own”* (EUS1).

One teacher, although he is positive, is not sure Basque should be taught everywhere because of possible negative consequences *“In our case it is fine; but in other towns, where Basque is not spoken, they end up hating it [Basque]”* (EUS19). Another teacher answers that it depends on the sociolinguistic context: *“It is good here, but not in other places where there is a Spanish speaking environment”* (EUS26) and he adds *“I am in favour of teaching in Spanish to those children who are in Spanish speaking areas and have Spanish as mother tongue”* (EUS26). It is an opinion that seems to defend the A-model and goes against the general language policy of encouraging the teaching through Basque.

Another concern, mentioned by some teachers, is with the pupils who have recently moved into their schools from outside the Basque Country, especially immigrant children whose mother tongue is Spanish: *“The biggest problem teachers have felt has been with*

pupils coming from South America, even if the school organizes well and uses good resources, the outcomes, with some exceptions, are very poor and that is very despairing. (...) Having Spanish (as mother tongue) becomes a hurdle" (EUS52). For temporary immigrants an informal solution is sometimes found: *"Those who are here only for two years and then return to their countries, they receive instruction in Spanish"* (EUS55).

Even though the Frisian teachers generally are not in favour of teaching through the medium of Frisian, some of them show a more or less positive opinion, for example by limiting the use *"Yes, on the Frisian parts of the day"* (FRY35). The same teacher also thinks that *"a lot more teaching through Frisian could be done though"* and she mentions as examples *"sports, creative subjects, those are subjects where Frisian could very well be used"* (FRY35).

In contrast to the feeling that the use of Basque as medium of instruction is *"natural"*, some Frisian teachers see it as unusual for themselves: *"I have never given it any thought how I feel about that. For me personally, it would be hard to teach in Frisian"* (FRY37). Another teacher says that *"as long as it is taught by someone who knows the language"* (FRY36) and obviously this teacher does not teach in Frisian. However, another teacher expresses as her opinion that teaching through Frisian can be positive but not for herself: *"I cannot do it. But for the children who have to learn Frisian, it would be good to immerse them in the language"* (FRY40). One of the teachers who does not teach in Frisian also shows concern for the non-Frisian speaking children by wondering: *"Also for children who are weak at languages?"* (FRY37). These Frisian teachers feel it could be positive to use Frisian as medium of instruction, but they do not feel they could or would like to teach through Frisian themselves. Perhaps they should speak to their colleague who does have experience with teaching through Frisian and who says *"At the beginning it feels very awkward, but I'm sure that you get used to in no time."* (FRY39).

Among the Frisian teachers who actually teach Frisian lessons or through Frisian there are diverse feelings and overall they are not as positive as their Basque colleagues. One teacher uses the (stereo-) typical expression when asked to express oneself in favour of Frisian *"I am not a fanatic in using Frisian"* (FRY38) and she adds another 'softener' about Frisian as 'fun': *"Sometimes it's fun but only when we speak in the group"* (FRY38), and she even uses an often told statement: *"For me it is not a necessity"* (FRY38). Another teacher takes a more intermediate position *"When you are at a trilingual school and you have got an English day and a Frisian day, then it is okay to teach in Frisian"* (FRY34).

Several Basque teachers mentioned the sociolinguistic context as a consideration for the language of instruction (see above). A few teachers in Friesland refer to their geographic location near to the language border or also to their specific local situation: *"I understand that it might be nice [to use more Frisian], but things are different here [in our town]"* (FRY41). The same teacher also mentions the parents as a reason for not using Frisian as medium of instruction: *"Also, the parents are not interested"* (FRY41). One teacher feels the impossibility to teach through Frisian: *"They first have to try it in Dutch; I wish it were different and they could use Frisian, because Frisian is my mother tongue, but that is how our society wants it"* (FRY42).

There is relatively little teaching material available in Frisian, which is seen as an obstacle for the use of Frisian as language of instruction. Several teachers mention this factor: *"The problem with geography is that the texts are in Dutch"* (FRY42) and *"We use Dutch for History since the method is in Dutch.... We would like to be able to teach it in Frisian but unfortunately we cannot."* (FRY45). One of them is aware that it is not a real obstacle: *"the History method is in Dutch so you speak Dutch. But you could do it in Frisian"* (FRY42).

Not having sufficient resources in Frisian is believed to be an obstacle for others too and the only Frisian teacher who seems outspoken against teaching through Frisian (see above) somewhat qualifies his negative answer by adding *"because all methods are in Dutch"* and when *"Frisian is a subject, that is the time to talk Frisian"* (FRY44). The following teacher explains how the language of the textbooks conditions for him the language of instruction: *"Sometimes I use the Dutch method, other times the Frisian. Which language I speak depends on the method"* (FRY43).

Some teachers feel positive about teaching content subjects through the medium of Frisian although they accept there may be difficulties for the pupils: *"They don't mind History in Frisian but they do find it difficult. Reading is okay but writing sentences is difficult for them. We do that together"* (FRY43). One teacher has found a way to overcome that obstacle *"I do teach History in Frisian. We read the Dutch text and we discuss the text in Frisian"* (FRY46). In the literature this practice is referred to as 'translanguaging'. The same teacher mentions again that the main obstacle is the lack of good materials in Frisian: *"It might sound slightly awkward but these are the methods we have and there are no comparable Frisian methods"* (FRY46).

In summary, in the case of Friesland, the use of the minority language as the language of instruction is conditioned by several reasons. This can be a personal lack of preparation, skills, attitudes or willingness to do so. Parents or society are perceived as not wanting it, and the lack of textbooks or methods in Frisian is also mentioned frequently.

The use of the minority language as medium of instruction creates concerns for some teachers in both the Basque Country and Friesland, when they mention the sociolinguistic context, or the arrival of immigrants.

6.3.2 Teaching through English

The teachers were also asked to give their opinion about the use of English as a medium of instruction. Their answers were quite different from the answers about the minority language as medium of instruction. In both regions English is the third language taught in schools and the teaching of English is an important issue in both educational systems. The issue is not at all whether English should be taught or not because that is taken for granted, but the issues are when, how much or in which way.

The general reaction of the Basque and Frisian teachers when they were asked about their opinion on using English as medium of instruction was to respond positively and using

expressions such as *“It is fine”, “I think it is good”, or “I think it is great”, or as one says “We do believe in it 100%”* (EUS7). The answers of the Frisian teachers are as positive as those of the Basque teachers and many believe their pupils would benefit from it: *“Education in English is possible”* (FRY36), *“The pupils learn a lot from that”* (FRY39) and *“That is the way it should be”* (FRY41).

One Basque teacher summarizes the idea of English being good for the pupils by saying: *“Very good. As far as the research articles we have read, in long term the pupils do well. I believe it is the right thing to be immersed in three languages”* (EUS21). This answer shows that schools have not taken the initiative to teach English lightly but have taken into consideration academic research on the subject.

It is interesting to observe that the teachers in general say the use of English as a medium of instruction is positive; however, their answer was often followed by a “but”. In that way they introduce some areas of concern. Teachers who think positive about teaching through English and teachers who think it is not such a good idea, agree on some concerns. Their doubts rise from three main areas, which can be presented in the form of a list:

- The language ability of the pupils:
 - *“The experience I have is that one or two follow but the rest do not (...) many pupils get lost”* and he proposes *“instead of starting with English as medium of instruction of other content subject in primary I would leave it for secondary school”* (EUS4)
 - *“If they have a good level in Basque and Spanish then it is fine but if not, I would question it, I think the other two languages need to be well set-in”* (EUS30)
 - *“If some pupils struggle with Basque they will struggle with English, I doubt they will learn Science in English”* (EUS32)
 - *“Well, here we are bilingual and now we have a third language and I am not sure, depending on the grade, maybe in 5th grade, we can include a third language but not before. It is better to know two languages well than a third language”* (EUS26)
 - *“I would like to teach English in English but right now they [pupils] would not know what I mean”* (FRY37)
- The ability of the teachers in English:
 - *“Teaching that way really stands and falls with the skills of the teachers. Their level needs to be improved to be able to do this”* (FRY40)
 - *“Sometimes I have to look for words and I’m afraid what I’ve just said was incorrect but then I think to myself, it doesn’t matter, as long as I speak English as much as possible”* (FRY43)
 - *“Only if you master the language perfectly, otherwise you’ll teach them things the wrong way”* (FRY36)
- Concern for other subjects:
 - *“We, teachers, are scared that we might take instructional time off other languages”* (EUS55)

- *“To teach a whole subject in English, I don’t know if that’s necessary. Because the Dutch language is also very important to teach subjects in”* (FRY43)
- *“To teach some English yes, the basics, but I am not in favour of what is done here; to reduce hours in some subjects in order to give importance to English, when they do not know Basque”* (EUS22)
- *“ It requires time off other subjects”* (EUS3)

It is not clear which of these three areas would have most weight, perhaps the concern about their own abilities to teach through English, because it seems to be what worries many teachers.

One teacher in Friesland, who himself teaches English as a subject, but does not use English for other subjects, brings forward an interesting observation: *“For English lessons I also use Dutch (...) I would like to speak more English in class and have done so, even for a whole lesson. The pupils loved it. And they have to talk English as well, although it is hard for them”* (FRY42). This teacher himself has difficulties speaking English all the time and he recognizes that the children face similar problems, but as one Basque teacher of English says, it is important for the teacher to get ready: *“If you are an English teacher what you need to do is ‘get moving’”* [She said in Spanish: *“ponerse las pilas”*] (EUS7).

Most teachers express positive feelings about teaching through English, some have some concerns, but there is one Basque teacher who is outspoken against English as a medium of instruction: *“Well, I am not in favour of trilingualism [in education], I think we have enough with two languages, and we should teach Basque well and not English and other nonsense”* (EUS22).

When English was introduced in the Basque schools as the language of instruction some teachers had their concerns, but also parents were worried that their children would not benefit. This was explained by the interviewed headmasters: *“Parents and teachers were afraid that the content could get lost in English”* (EUS52) and *“Some parents were against it but most supported the idea, their concern was that it would take time off Basque. Some parents were also concerned that they would not be able to understand the content that well”* (EUS56). It seems the worries of the parents were similar to those of the teachers because again the possible lack of ability of the pupils and taking time off other subjects were mentioned. Several teachers report that their original doubts have been overcome once the results prove to be good and things take their course: *“I had my doubts, but the pupils did well, the surprise was good. So we have implemented it in primary 5 and 6; it is more natural now”* (EUS15) and similar ideas exist among Frisian teachers: *“I taught creative arts also in English and that went okay”* (FRY46).

During the interview the teachers have given a lot of additional ideas on how the teaching through English can be made better. For example, to improve the teaching of English, better coordination of teachers is mentioned: *“I think that we need to be careful; it is enriching, but you need coordination among all teachers”* (EUS29). She also refers, indirectly, to the circumstance that English teachers in the Basque Country usually do not

have the qualification to teach content subjects and tutors are not always able to teach in English (as was mentioned in chapter 5).

Content and Language Integrated Learning or CLIL is a hot topic when it comes to teach English. However, many times during the interviews, the opinion about CLIL came up as part of the question “What is your opinion about teaching through the medium of English?” According to the teachers not all of them are convinced that CLIL is a good idea, and not all teachers want to give CLIL a lot of priority. For example a Basque teacher says: *“Well, it is okay to have one class in English but I think they have enough with getting to know their own mother tongue well”* (EUS33). In Friesland not all teachers are convinced either, or, as one of them puts it *“someone who has already trouble with maths is supposed to be taught maths in English? Well, I do not think that is a good idea”* (FRY36). He adds the following reason: *“You will have to invest because the teacher has to be educated adequately and not just have followed a simple course and then teach maths in English”*. Interestingly, teacher training is mentioned several times again in relation to this question.

Another teacher adds further considerations and shows a hesitant attitude: *“Subjects in English should be doable but do I want to? I believe it is a challenge but we are mostly educators and sometimes it is easier to explain things in Dutch”* (FRY45). She also has a suggestion of how multilingual teaching could take place: *“For world orientation it could be possible. We are thinking about having three whiteboards so we can write down the most important words of the lesson in three languages. I think it would be nice”*.

This section has shown that there are not only different opinions about the medium of instruction, either the minority language or English, in the Basque Country and in Friesland, but also between the different teachers. The positive and negative feelings presented here are of course only a sample of a wide range of opinions one can come across.

6.4 Teaching language skills

The teachers were also asked to answer a question about which skill is the most important of the four basic skills of language learning (listening, speaking, reading and writing). How do they evaluate the importance of these four skills for each language? They were invited to rank of importance of each skill, but to carry out such ranking of the four skills was usually not an easy task. Still, the way they dealt with the question gives some interesting insights in how teachers think about language acquisition.

Most teachers would rank-order the skills in the same way for all three languages, except a few Frisian teachers who tended to differentiate between the languages. However, different patterns come out for each of the skills. In one basic pattern teachers put oral skills as most important, usually starting with listening (also referred to as comprehension), and then speaking and after that literacy skills, either reading or writing or both at the same rank.

Examples of how they answered this question are:

- *“Comprehension, or listening, speaking, reading and writing, in that order”* (EUS6 and EUS17)
- *“At the beginning... listening and speaking are more important, [and then] reading and writing ... I would start from a good foundation on listening and speaking and then move to the others, but they need to master the four skills”* (EUS7)
- *“I value listening most, that you understand what’s being said. For all 3 languages. Then speaking, mostly English, because I want them to lose their fear. And I value writing as well as reading and that is why I want them to read more”* (FRY43)
- *“Frisian and English: 1) understanding 2) speaking 3) reading 4) writing; Dutch: all four skills equally important”* (FRY44)

The largest group of teachers answers according to this pattern. A variation on this pattern is to mention speaking as first, then listening and then the literacy skills, reading and writing. Examples of this second rank-order are:

- *“Speaking first, comprehension second and the others will come later”* (EUS30)
- *“Focus on speaking ... listening assignments ... make writing assignments”* (FRY34)
- *“Speaking would be the most important, and listening”* (EUS2)
- *“[for Frisian and English] 1-speaking 2 listening 3 reading 4 writing”* (FRY38)

A smaller group of teachers mentions a third pattern where the importance of reading is the highest, thereafter listening and then sometimes writing. They usually do not mention speaking (or communicating):

- *“Reading is very important, second is listening, writing is last”* (EUS15)
- *“Reading and comprehension first, then writing”* (EUS33)

In still another pattern the passive language skills are mentioned first and the active skills later, for example some teachers ordered the skills as:

- *“Listening first, reading second, writing and then speaking last?”* (EUS32)
- *“[in all languages] 1 listening, 2 reading, 3 speaking, 4 writing”* (FRY35)

Some Frisian teachers rank-order each of the three languages differently and at the same time they emphasize a different language learning aim for each language. In this case more elaborate answers are provided such as:

- *“Frisian: understanding most important, writing can be skipped. Dutch: rank ordering: reading, speaking, writing, listening. English: rank ordering: listening, speaking, reading, writing”* (FRY40). The following teacher poses the opposite by saying *“Frisian: writing, because that’s something they lack. Speaking is no problem for them.... Dutch: everything is important. English: writing and speaking”* (FRY42)

Not all teachers want to simply answer with a rank-order of importance of the four skills. They take the opportunity to elaborate further on this question. For example, they want to bring across the thought that all skills are necessary for the pupils. Several teachers say that

all four competences are important, or as one Basque teacher explicitly states: *"I cannot say which one is more important, they are related to each other"* (EUS14). The following Frisian teacher does not dare to rank the skills because as he says: *"I think this is a difficult question because you have to have a good basis in everything"* (FRY42). One teacher describes it as a sequential learning process, but does not make a choice: *"I think that the pupils first understand, then speak and finally write. But I do not know in what order of importance I would put them"* (EUS1). Thus, these teachers believe that all four have the same importance and among others the opinions vary on how the four language skills can be ranked in importance.

The teachers were also asked, but this time in a general way, about the importance of literacy skills, thus reading and writing. Obviously most teachers answer that literacy is important. Although the Basque teachers seem to have an idea about the order of the acquisition of the different skills in which reading and writing come later than the oral skills, or as one formulates her answer: *"First of all is the ability to understand, reading and writing will come later"* (EUS2). Or, even elaborating further for immigrant pupils: *"First speaking and then reading and writing. What immigrants learn first is speaking. And then reading and writing"* (EUS13). The Basque teachers more than the Frisian, mention reading as particularly important: *"Through reading you learn all other subjects"* (EUS10) and *"Reading has importance, we need to spend more time on it. Reading motivates pupils too"* (EUS29).

Oral skills in comparison to literacy are emphasized as well by other teachers: *"They are important but in the end a language is to communicate, so that is what we should do best"* (EUS28), and *"They [literacy skills] are important but oral communication is really necessary"* (EUS24). The importance of being able to communicate is formulated by a teacher who relates it to her own learning experience: *"Comprehension should be first; when we learned French we learned to write very well but when we travelled to France we were unable to understand, language should be first to communicate orally"* (EUS9).

As said before, the Frisian teachers differentiate more according to each language, thus also with this question about the importance of literacy skills, it seems that for them literacy in Frisian and English is less important than in Dutch. The following statement can illustrate this opinion: *"For Frisian and English [it is] less important to read and write but for Dutch all four skills are equally important"* (FRY44).

The question about the importance of literacy skills (reading and writing), the interview continued with a question on fluency and sounding natural: Are those important and how? Of course, as such it would be hard to say that fluency or sounding natural are not important and thus all teachers answered affirmative, some just by saying *"Yes, it is important"*, but other teachers made a number of interesting observations. For example, one English teacher in the Basque Country links the way of speaking to not being afraid to speak, when she remarks *"Yes, it is important. My pupils are used to speaking in a natural way without embarrassment"* (EUS1). This idea is shared by a teacher who formulates it similar: *"It is important that they talk naturally in English, some are quiet because they do not want to make mistakes but others just talk and this helps them to speak more naturally"* (EUS31). Several Frisian teachers also put greater emphasis on the courage to speak English

than on fluency or naturalness, for example: *"The most important is that they dare to speak it."* (FRY34) or, in similar words: *"I would like to lower their 'daring' threshold. It's okay to make mistakes"* (FRY35). The importance of the pedagogical side is expressed as follows: *"Now they are able to practise in a safe surrounding to get over the discomfort a bit"* (FRY37).

The advantage of having fluency for easier communication is another opinion some Basque and Frisian teachers share: *"It will be easier to express themselves"* (EUS19), and *"The message is transmitted better"* (EUS2), although this statement is somewhat qualified by other teachers when they remark: *"They don't have to speak English fluently as long as they understand and make themselves understood"* (FRY48). One teacher also points out that even if she finds sounding natural important, this is not shared by the pupils or the parents: *"Intonation is important but pupils and parents do not respond to it"* (EUS27). Another teacher also finds 'sounding natural' important but she perceives an obstacle to attain it by the lack of knowledge of enough words: *"Language needs to be natural but the vocabulary is a problem"* (EUS33).

As was mentioned before in Friesland the teachers agree with the importance of fluency/naturalness to a certain degree, but then they place the emphasis somewhat different. One seems to accept that fluency cannot be the aim: *"Well, you will always be able to hear that someone has Dutch as his mother tongue"* (FRY36) and as another one puts it: *"Why would it be wrong to be able to hear that you are Dutch? I don't mind people from other provinces asking me whether I am Frisian. I think to myself, 'good, you recognise it'"* (FRY43). Finally, one Frisian teacher, who teaches all three languages, makes an interesting distinction between the languages for the importance of sounding natural and fluent: *"In Dutch, of course it is important. For Frisian it depends of their mother tongue and for English, I don't have too high requirements"* (FRY39).

6.5 Main challenges in teaching languages

To learn more about the perspective of the teachers on language learning, it is interesting to know their opinions on the problems they have to face in teaching each of the three languages. During the interview they were asked a specific question about the main difficulties of their pupils with the dominant language, the minority language and English. A general answer that does not seem to specifically refer to any of the languages is the following remark: *"A lack of [good] study habits"* (EUS26).

6.5.1 Challenges for Basque and Frisian

The challenges the pupils face with Frisian and Basque, the minority language, are different in both regions. As with the majority language the areas where pupils struggle most are speaking, writing and reading. Some teachers explicitly repeat the same difficulty for Basque as for Spanish: *"Also orthography"* (EUS6, EUS8, EUS13 and EUS32), *"Vocabulary"* (EUS9, EUS27) and *"Expression too"* (EUS11, EUS15 and EUS30). One teacher mentions both: *"They*

lack vocabulary, so they cannot express what they would like to" (EUS22). Reading comprehension is mentioned again several times as an important challenge for the pupils as well as obtaining adequate productive skills, sometimes they refer to speaking (EUS10, EUS25, and EUS28) and sometimes to writing (EUS7, EUS32). There are also teachers who bring more specific issues about grammar to the fore, for example, problems with *"Auxiliary verbs"* (EUS14) or, *"The structure of the sentence and the verbs"* (EUS19) or, *"Word order"* (EUS28).

The position of Basque in society also plays a role as becomes clear from remarks such as: *"Sometimes it is difficult for them to master standard Basque. We want to teach them both, the local variety and the standard"* (EUS24). Another teacher points basically to the same challenge of having to deal with dialect variation in Basque when he remarks: *"To be able to distinguish between local variety and school variety"* (EUS17).

One teacher concludes: *"The level is quite low in my opinion"* (EUS28) and two others distinguish again differences between mother tongues or the influence of the environment: *"Pupils whose first language is Spanish, they have more difficulties with the structure of Basque"* (EUS13) or *"It is different in each place [area]"* (EUS24).

In contrast, in Friesland the teachers rarely give the same answer for Frisian as for Dutch, the only example is: *"Spelling"* (FRY38, FRY45). Interestingly one teacher mentions, similar to his Basque colleagues, the distinction according to mother tongue: *"Non-Frisians have trouble reading"* (FRY41). Motivation is an additional problem which occurs with Frisian but it does not seem to play a role for Dutch or English (and it was not mentioned for Spanish or Basque). One of the teachers formulates it as follows: *"Motivation for the Frisian language. Parents don't see the necessity and that reflects on their children"* (FRY35). This challenge points to a general issue about Frisian in society and a comparatively weak language policy by the provincial and state governments. The weakness of the policy has consequences for the amount of Frisian taught and also for the way Frisian can be taught as a subject.

6.5.2 Challenges for Spanish and Dutch

The difficulties the pupils have with Spanish or Dutch, the dominant languages, are quite varied. In general, the responses can be grouped under three main categories: problems with speaking, with reading or with writing. The perception of the Basque and Frisian teachers with each aspect differs slightly. Only the Basque teachers report that their pupils find speaking in Spanish difficult, or, as one teacher says: *"The biggest problem at this level is speaking [Spanish]"* (EUS6), and a colleague calls it difficulty of *"expression"* (EUS30). The cause can be limited or poor vocabulary, more than once it was said: *"They have poor vocabulary"* (EUS9) and *"They lack vocabulary"* (EUS17) and also poor grammar was mentioned. None of the Frisian teachers mention difficulties with speaking Dutch, only one Frisian teacher refers to vocabulary as the main difficulty his pupils have with Dutch (FRY44).

The Frisian teachers agree with their Basque colleagues that reading comprehension is problematic for their pupils. As was said already before the lack of a reading habit is mentioned many times during the interviews in both regions. One Basque teacher summarizes it well: *"They do not read, therefore they do not understand, their vocabulary range is very limited, and writing as well, but it is all related to reading"* (EUS33).

Several teachers in the Basque Country and also some in Friesland designate writing as the main problem their pupils have with Spanish and Dutch. Some point at written comprehension in general, but other teachers mention specifically orthography of Spanish (EUS2, EUS8, EUS14, EUS20) and many Frisian teachers are even more specific when they mention for Dutch *"verb spelling"* (FRY38, FRY37, FRY38, FRY41, FRY46, FRY48). This can be explained by the problems of verbs with root + 't', which is a notorious issue in Dutch spelling. Although the teachers were not explicitly asked to distinguish according to mother tongue, interestingly one of the teachers, who teaches both Basque and Spanish as a subject, points out that: *"Spanish speakers do not have problems to express and produce, but Basque speakers have problems with expression and production, of both speaking and writing [in Spanish]"* (EUS11).

6.5.3 Challenges for English

To some it may be a remarkable outcome that the main challenges the pupils face learning English are largely overlapping with those the pupils have with the majority and the minority language. The answers of the Basque and Frisian teachers about English can be categorized as follows. First, the teachers distinguish between passive and productive skills. Some point to difficulties with comprehension of English (EUS1, EUS12, and FRY37), in particular of written texts, but more often teachers mention the lack of sufficient productive skills. It can concern both speaking and writing, but speaking is brought up more often. For example, *"To express orally what they need to say"* (EUS5), or, *"When they have to produce it is hard"* (EUS28) and *"It is speaking in full sentences"* (FRY36). One teacher observes as the reason for these difficulties: *"The lack of vocabulary when they want to communicate"* (EUS14) and another teacher mentions: *"They struggle with speaking [English] because they are embarrassed"* (EUS7). This last statement points to a lack of confidence, or, as another teacher says: *"They have a big fear of speaking in English"* (FRY43) and yet another teacher says the way to overcome the obstacle of English is to *"dare"* (FRY35). Another problem for the pupils to learn English can be summarized as 'correctness'. For some teachers this is *"spelling"* (FRY38, FRY44 and FRY45), for another teacher it is more grammatical: *"To construct a good sentence"* (FRY37), and still another teacher mentions: *"Pronunciation and ... correctness too"* (EUS5). Pronunciation is also mentioned by two Frisian teachers.

One of the Frisian teachers starts to compare the difficulties her pupils might have with all three languages and she points out that: *"They find it easier [to learn] English because it is a computer language, and it is a fashionable language"* (FRY45).

6.5.4 Obstacles and facilitators for learning languages

A whole range of different answers were collected from the teachers when they were asked about their ideas on what helps to learn languages, or “facilitators”, and what discourages learning languages, or “obstacles”. It is important to bear in mind, of course, that during the situation of the interview the teacher chooses the thing that comes first to mind and they mention one or two factors. If the teachers had been presented with some of the facilitators and obstacles which other teachers mentioned, they would have probably agreed that more than just one or two factors are important.

Many of the answers given can be both formulated as a facilitator and an obstacle at the same time, depending on the perspective taken, there can also be other factors at play, but the answers are grouped and categorized here under four factors: 1) social environment, 2) personal or individual, 3) parental and 4) school. Each factor will be discussed briefly.

- *Social environment factor*

The social environment is seen as an important factor which is mentioned both as a facilitator and as an obstacle. One teacher says it as follows: *“An obstacle would be the environment, but it can also be a facilitator”* (EUS14). Many teachers refer to the social context as the *“environment”*, *“contact with the language”*, *“input”*, etc. However, this factor is only mentioned by the Basque teachers, none of the Frisian interviewees did mention it.

The social context is seen as a facilitator when the language has a (strong) presence and is used by others with the children. In contrast, the context becomes an obstacle when the language is not used and remains confined to the classroom or specific language lessons. This sounds all rather as an obvious truth, but it is interesting to observe how the teachers differentiate different aspects of the social context and what they choose to emphasize. They also draw attention to differences for the same language in different contexts, in particular for Basque in different parts of the Basque Country. Thus, the context of the school can be positive as in: *“This is a good environment to learn Basque, better than in other Basque areas”* (EUS4) but it can also be negative, because there is not enough Basque as another teacher from a less Basque speaking area says: *“They only use Basque here at school, everything they do outside is in Spanish”* (EUS10).

According to the teachers, the environment does not only affect the learning of Basque, it also affects both Spanish and English. In the case of Spanish, the environment can also be an obstacle: *“The environment here is very Basque; so Spanish and English are foreign to the pupils”* (EUS17), but this seems an isolated case since most pupils in any area of the Basque Country are exposed to and have the opportunity to use Spanish outside school, which is not the case of English. The teachers often mention as an obstacle the lack of English in the environment and the opportunity to use it outside the school: *“The obstacles are different in each language; in the case of English it is the presence, in countries like Denmark, Finland, they control this differently because the presence of English is important in those countries, but the presence of English in here [in the Basque Country] is*

null" (EUS7). Some Basque teachers suggest that having television in English would help the pupils: *"This is not an English speaking area...we need TV in English, more input"* (EUS4) and actually their Frisian peers do agree that television in English facilitates language learning: *"When children watch a lot of TV-programmes that makes a difference for their English language development"* (FRY46).

In conclusion it can be observed that teachers in both regions agree that direct contact with, and opportunities to use a language are important facilitators for learning: *"A facilitator is if you can listen and read the language in many places that helps. You have to have contact with the language"* (EUS2) and also *"A lot of contact with English; watching movies without subtitles, games..."* (FRY40). This is of course not surprising, but there are other factors as well.

- *Personal or individual factors*

Many teachers in the Basque Country and in Friesland mention obstacles and facilitators that are related to the learners as an individual; for example:

- ability to learn languages:
 - *"Obstacle is diversity, there are different levels in class, learning diversity"* (EUS29) and
 - *"Languages are easier for some people than for others"* (FRY42)
- motivation:
 - *"Lack of motivation will refrain you from learning"* (EUS1) and
 - *"Pupils have to know what they're doing it for"* (FRY36)
- need to use a language:
 - *"A facilitator would be to have the need to use it; Moroccan children learn Basque in a year due to necessity; they need to use it. Those whose mother tongue is Spanish take longer to learn Basque because they communicate through Spanish, they do not have the need to communicate in Basque"* (EUS6)
 - *"The pupils do not see they need to learn English, and they do not see they need English to live"* (EUS7).

The personal dimension can thus refer to different aspects, some of which seem to be seen as given or fixed (ability) and another that can be influenced (motivation). To some extent there is overlap with the factor social environment (need to use). In other ways it is also related to the next factor of the influence of parents.

- *Parental factor*

In the case of learning English, parents emphasize the economic value which functions as a facilitator. For example as the following teacher states: *"Parents tell them [their children] they will find jobs with English"* (EUS9). Other teachers say the slight involvement of parents can be an obstacle in their children's education. In both the Basque Country and in Friesland,

teachers say that pupils do not read enough; they should read at home as well. One teacher reminds that *“we do tell the parents in the meetings what they can do at home”* (EUS20), which is usually to watch TV in a certain language, or buy newspapers and magazines in the language they want to reinforce.

- *School factor*

Many teachers report that the school itself can create obstacles or be a facilitator. For example, school time is mentioned as an obstacle when the time allocated to language learning is not enough: *“The amount of time of immersion in both languages, in a week, they only have three hours of English and the same in Basque”* (EUS20), or, *“When we organize classes the degree of importance of some subjects and the amount of time invested on those subjects; we might not offer the required time to work on something they are having problems with. There are 5 hours of Basque in 5th grade, is it enough? I do not know, sometimes I miss having more time”* (EUS32), and *“An obstacle is the one hour per week [of Frisian]”* (FRY40).

Another aspect that is mentioned quite often, which can be both an obstacle and a facilitator in the school context, is the methodology or the textbooks used for language instruction. The Frisian teachers frequently mention this aspect. For example, they say that *“To make learning easier: immersion!”* (FRY35) or, *“The material has to look attractive”* (FRY36).

A Basque teacher talks about new resources, such as ICT and social media, which are facilitators in his opinion: *“With all the resources there are, they are all facilitators”* (EUS32). His idea is probably shared by a Frisian colleague who shares the following anecdote: *“I have shown an old method once, they really didn’t know what they saw, there was just one picture and even that was in black and white. I sometimes tell them that I envy them [because they have nice textbooks and many more resources]”* (FRY36).

The amount of time and the methods are of course issues that the teachers only have limited influence on.

6.5.5 Successful multilingual education

The teachers were further asked about how multilingual education can be made successful and they gave a wide range of answers. Perhaps more than other questions this one is quite open and many factors can contribute to the success of teaching multiple languages. Here a selection from the variety of answers will be presented.

Again the sociolinguistic environment is a factor of importance. For example, one Basque teacher wants to take local circumstances into account to get good results: *“Adapt it to the place: where only Basque is spoken they need Spanish ... Not one model for everybody but adapting it to the local needs”* (EUS28). A colleague formulates the social factor in different words, but basically it comes down to the same idea: *“I do not know whether with the 33-33-33% we will get to multilingualism. Society is not divided in that way, so we need*

to have more teaching in one language than in the others; the same as society" (EUS15). Another teacher points out that the times have changed and that a one-fits-all model is no longer valid: *"To implement a multilingual project, the environment should be taken into account. The D-model for everyone was good years ago, but nowadays it is not. In some places they need more Spanish and in others more Basque"* (EUS14).

The importance of the needs of the pupils when designing a multilingual programme stands out as important: *"If you want the pupils at age 15 to be able to speak in three languages ... each school should have its own policy and take its own decisions. For example, we started teaching Spanish at an earlier age. The policy should be implemented taking the needs [of the pupils] into account"* (EUS17). Some Basque teachers thus suggest that multilingual programmes should be made according to the pupils' needs, one Frisian teacher shows similar concern that one model might not fit all pupils: *"It can be a problem for language weak children"* (FRY37).

"Motivation" is mentioned by some Basque teachers as a key factor for success; for example: *"[multilingual education] should be attractive and motivating. Motivating to attract pupils to learn a language"* (EUS2). Similar "motivation" as a factor probably underlies the reference to love for languages as by the following Frisian teachers: *"When you are able to bring across the love for languages"* (FRY43) or *"When you teach the children the love for languages"* (FRY45).

Some Basque teachers mention as the first thing that comes to mind the parents as a success factor: *"If parents are not on board with what I am doing, the children will not want to learn"* (EUS10) and *"With the involvement of parents and pupils we can achieve a lot"* (EUS20).

A remarkable difference between the Basque and the Frisian teachers is that the Basque teachers do not refer to themselves as professionals who work in a team as a factor in the success of multilingual education, whereas several of the Frisian teachers mention the team as the most important factor: *"You need a motivated team"* (FRY34), or: *"Awareness inside the team, that everyone thinks the same about it"* (FRY38) and: *"Motivation of the educational team (...) a motivated teacher is able to get everyone to work along"* (FRY35).

The observation was already made (in Chapter 5) that Frisian teachers in general separate languages less strictly than Basque teachers, thus it may come a bit as a surprise that several Frisian teachers point to language separation as a factor that contributes to success of multilingual education: *"It can be only successful if you consequently separate the languages"* (FRY39), or *"Teach Frisian, Dutch and English as separate subjects"* (FRY44), and *"You have to make good arrangements and separate the languages well"* (FRY46).

Multilingual education, in order to be successful, also has to bear in mind the power relationships between languages, as one Basque teacher says: *"Take into account the most powerful language or languages in society and then at school, we should empower those weaker languages"* (EUS12). Even though she does not mention it explicitly, she clearly refers to the weaker, underlying position of Basque and the dominant social position of Spanish. The idea of empowerment of Basque is also mentioned by others. As in this case where a relationship is made with official decision making: *"The government should give*

more importance to Basque on the Basque TV, all documents should be in Basque. The first language should be Basque" (EUS22).

Some teachers have no clear answer but they express their worries: "I wonder how in other places they get the pupils to be fluent in Basque. We have an immersion programme but we do not get those [good] results. Maybe it is that we do not have many Basque speakers here while they do in other places. Having non-Basque speakers mixed with Basque-speakers in immersion programmes might help the non-Basque speakers. Also, how is it possible that in other countries they get such a good level of English and we do not get that level?" (EUS25). Another teacher searches the solution in a simple learning strategy: "Maybe to learn by heart some sentence models, so when they address you they know how to do it using those sentences" (EUS26).

There are Frisian teachers who mention teacher training as a factor, thus reflecting back again on themselves as teachers: "You have to invest: the teacher has to be educated adequately" (FRY36).

For one teacher to make multilingual education succeed it is necessary: "To connect with secondary education is very important" (FRY44). It must be borne in mind that Frisian primary and secondary schools are independent, they only serve one level of education, therefore, the primary and secondary levels are often not well connected and thus, in this teacher's opinion, it would help to have a continuation with the higher level. Because, as was mentioned at the end of chapter 4 and in chapter 6.2.1, some teachers find that their pupils start all over again from the basics in English. Therefore, as the teacher suggests, connecting with secondary schools could help the multilingual programmes to succeed.

One Frisian teacher wonders aloud how you can test success and for him a success is: "When they communicate in a certain language, for example English, the goal is reached already" (FRY42) and another teacher has similar ideas: "When they are able to manage themselves a bit in all languages" (FRY43). Therefore, if the pupils are able to communicate in all languages these teachers believe that the multilingual programme is successful.

There are several other factors for success suggested by the Frisian teachers: - the age of the children: "You need to start when the children are very young" (FRY34); - the materials: "nice materials do help as well" (FRY35), or, "more teaching methods in different languages! So also History in English " (FRY38); - the curriculum: "Rules about the schedule per day in the three languages" (FRY38), or: "Extra conversation lessons" (FRY38); and the use of language: "Only when they get a lot of lessons in the language and can practice a lot" (FRY40); or, "When they do it [use the language] a lot" (FRY41) and "use language" (FRY44).

As can be seen a wide variety of factors are mentioned. Some are external or given, others can be influenced by the teachers themselves. There is no overall agreement on one or two decisive success factors for multilingual education to succeed. The idea of tailor-made solutions for each school instead of one-size-fits all is emphasized in these opinions. Other teachers also believe that in order for a multilingual programme to be successful it needs to be customized to the needs of the pupils and to the local circumstances in society.

Chapter 7: Teach languages differently and a “Golden Tip” for new teachers

7.1 Teach language differently?

During the interviews the teachers were asked what they would like to do differently with regard to language teaching. The number of different answers is almost the same as the number of respondents, but there are also some ideas that are repeated. For example, for English language teaching some Frisian and Basque teachers agree that classes should be more dynamic and active, including games and songs, and especially to make the pupils actively use English: *“A language practicum! (...) they really have to be busy with it: talk and talk”*. (FRY36) and: *“My personal experience is that languages are learned by using, speaking. Therefore, our pupils need to use them. They need more opportunities to use the languages, to feel the need to use it”* (EUS6).

Wanting a different way of teaching English, some Frisian and Basque teachers also agree on the importance of having contact with native speakers of English: *“A native speaker of English, that would be a great help”*. (FRY45), or: *“I would like to have a couple from London talking to and working with the pupils”* (EUS28) and: *“Contacts with schools in the UK, children learn a lot outside the books”* (FRY44).

As far as answers concern teaching the minority and the dominant language in a different way, the teachers refer often to more general issues. In both regions they mention that groups should be smaller, that pupils should do more group work and again, that pupils should have more opportunities to use the language, especially the minority languages Frisian and Basque, which for many pupils is only a school language. Although Frisian and Basque teachers agree on some of their wishes, there are other issues that are only in the wish list of one region. For example, many Frisian teachers would like to have more computers for their pupils and that the Frisian teaching method, textbook and resources, should be more attractive and contemporary: *“We could take the Frisian method and modernise it, so it suits the current situation better”* (FRY45) and another teacher says: *“I need more reading books, these are too old”* (FRY43). A Frisian teacher also says *“If I could decide, the children would have Frisian on all days, but that is of course impossible”* (FRY47), which demonstrates that also teachers with a positive attitude towards the minority language are restrained by the ‘existing reality’.

Finally, there are also some teachers who mention that they are happy with how languages are taught and that they would not do anything differently: *“I’m satisfied with our language education”* (FRY40) and *“I would not do anything differently”* (EUS10).

7.2 Golden tip for new teachers

The teachers were during the interviews asked to provide one piece of good advice to a new, beginning teacher. In other words, if they could give a ‘Golden tip’ for a young teacher. The teachers gave an interesting range of advice and their answers are classified according to

four dimensions: language, theory versus practice, the relationship with the pupils, and characteristics of teachers as a person.

7.2.1 Language dimension

First of all, because the interviews focus on language teaching, several teachers answer this question in terms of advice on language learning. Their advice goes basically in two directions, on the one hand regarding the pupils or on the other hand regarding the teachers. Thus, teachers mention the importance of motivating the pupils. For example, *"They (= the pupils) should like languages"* (EUS21) or, another teacher says: *"Make it attractive: use internet, movies, TV-programs"* (FRY38) and a third one states: *"Assert the joy of a new language"* (FRY37). These comments refer to the positive side of language learning and to make the pupils aware of that in order to motivate them. The teachers can refer to language learning in general, but also to foreign language learning or more specifically to English. One of the Basque teachers applies the advice to Basque, when she says *"Be encouraging about our language"* (=Basque) (EUS20).

Other teachers comment upon the English language skills of themselves as teachers. One piece of advice is to *"Go abroad to learn a language and more"* (EUS28), in this case the "more" implies culture, habits, lifestyles, etc. Another says it in more general terms, when she advises *"Get things as good as possible ... master the language yourself"* (FRY40). In other words, but with positive consequences a colleague formulates it as *"Dare yourself to speak a foreign language. If you dare to do it, the pupils will also dare"* (FRY47). About improving language proficiency in English, one of the Frisian teachers gives as a tip to *"Watch the BBC"* (FRY35) and her Frisian colleague reflects on his own weakness when he formulates as a 'Golden tip': *"Something I am not able to do myself: speak the language the whole lesson!"* (FRY41). It may come as a surprise when one of the Frisian teachers says: *"Be consequent in separating the languages. That's quite a challenge"* (FRY49).

7.2.2 Theory versus practice

Quite frequently, the advice given to young beginning teachers is to be aware of the difference between the theories learned at the teacher training college and the real work at a school (EUS8). One of the interviewees even advises to *"forget the theory"* because *"it is another world"* (EUS12). Another teacher expresses it rather colourful when she advises to be aware that *"Children are not refrigerators that come with manuals"* (EUS24).

Practice is seen as more important than theory, because as a colleague formulates: *"To work with children is learned on the job"* (EUS30). A Frisian teacher compares it to learning to drive a car: *"Realise that you yourself still have to learn, it's like driving a car: you've got your license but you still have to learn, even when you have your degree. When I got my first group, I got some guidance, ask for that."* (FRY42). The learning on the job is also emphasized by a number of interviewees who similarly point to the importance of more experienced colleagues. Those who know the practice can be asked for help (EUS17, EUS24,

EUS32, and FRY43). Another teacher gives the same advice but in different words when she advises to work in collaboration as a team with other teachers (EUS10).

The dimension of the “real practice” includes the advice to get to know: *“What the school is like and how it works”* (EUS15) and another teacher adds: *“The whole school, not just your own classroom”* (EUS2). One teacher associates the gap between theory and practice with the advice for continuous training and updating of knowledge and skills (EUS1). Even the piece of advice *“Just does it, just try it”* (EUS39) implicitly confirms that the theory learned at teacher training is different from the reality of the classroom.

7.2.3 The relationship with the pupils

Several teachers come up with a piece of useful advice in terms of maintaining good relationships with the pupils. For example, as one teacher suggests: *“To get the confidence of the pupils”* (EUS6), or in similar words, another says: *“To get close to the pupils and know where they are”* (EUS9). One way to do this seems to be to: *“Adapt your speech to them ... you need to get to their level, so they understand you”* (EUS23).

Part of this dimension of the relationship with the pupils is also about how to control the pupils. One of the teachers makes the remark: *“If you do not control the group there is nothing to do”* (EUS16). The following statement is even more direct: *“Discipline before anything else”* (EUS25); or, as another formulates it in different words: *“Sometimes routine is important; it makes them more responsible”* (EUS27). At the same time one of the Frisian teachers ‘warns’: *“You have to be able to improvise, because things often go different than planned”* (FRY45).

7.2.4 Teacher traits

Some answers to the question about advice to beginning teachers were given in terms of the kind of characteristics that a teacher as a person should have. Most frequently the advice was to *“Be patient”* (EUS3, EUS14, EUS22, EUS24, and EUS33), to which one could add tips like: *“To take it easy”* or, *“To calm down”* (EUS10). These bits of advice can also be interpreted as strategies to avoid too much stress in the job as a teacher.

Some other personality traits that will help one improve or survive as a beginning teacher are also mentioned. For example, *“To like teaching”* (EUS21), *“To have faith in oneself”* (EUS29), *“To show enthusiasm”* (FRY36), *“To not be inflexible”* (EUS33) or, more reflective: *“Also teachers can make mistakes...I’m only human”* (FRY34). From this range of answers it becomes clear that the teachers emphasized the human side of the job more than more technical pedagogical or didactic skills.

Overall there were no striking differences between the Basque and the Frisian teachers in giving a golden tip for beginners. Of course, this type of question also reflects back on these teachers themselves and on what they probably see as an “ideal” language

teacher. Perhaps all the 'golden tips' together create a profile of such an ideal language teacher which could be summarized as follows.

The golden tips for an 'ideal teacher', are that she or he has a high proficiency in the language or languages s/he teaches and s/he is able to motivate the pupils through an attractive teaching approach. Furthermore, this teacher has learned in practice what the reality of the classroom is like and is supported by her/his colleagues. S/he has to be patient with the pupils, relaxed and positive and able to control the pupils.

Chapter 8: Summary and discussion

The focus of this report is on primary school teachers in their role of language teachers in the context of the multilingual classroom, and thus a number of aspects of the language teaching processes have been presented. Of course, this study is based on a limited number of interviews with primary school teachers and headmasters (N=56) from a small number of schools (N=19), so it is not easy to generalize to all teachers of all schools in the Basque Country and Friesland. Given these limitations, the interviews have resulted in a range of interesting insights about different aspects of the teaching of a minority language, a majority language and English in the context of a multilingual classroom.

The language learning aims have to be borne in mind when discussing language use practices. As presented in chapter 6.1.1, the Frisian teachers they felt confident to reach their aims because they follow the textbook. Their Basque colleagues can verbalize the language learning aims, at least to some degree, but they know the language learning aims for the end of the secondary education better, than the more intermediate aims for the end of primary education. It also turned out that the teachers in Friesland and in the Basque Country both are convinced that they can fulfil the language learning aims by following the curriculum.

Most aspects are related to language use and language instruction and others are related to more general aspects of education. All of them were presented in order to answer the two research questions that were formulated for this study, as mentioned at the beginning of this report. Here these questions will be discussed further and some conclusions will be drawn. The first question was:

- Which language use practices and language teaching strategies for the different languages are applied by the primary school teachers?

In chapter 5.3 the language use practices in the Basque and Frisian schools were presented. It became clear that there are important differences between both regions. The main difference is that Dutch - the dominant language - is the language of instruction and the common language of primary schools in Friesland. In contrast in the Basque Country, the minority language Basque is the main language of instruction at primary level. Thus the dominant language is used in one case and the minority language in the other. Even though on the time table language allocation and thus language separation is similar in both regions, observations inside the classrooms, during instruction, make clear that language separation is more evident in the Basque Country than in Friesland. In principle the target language is the only language admitted in the classrooms, but many instances of code-switching and the use of translation occur, which function often to clarify the meaning of a word or to avoid misunderstanding.

According to many teachers in both regions there is a trend, not formally but informally, to use all three languages as an instructional resource. The teachers and the pupils are multilinguals and for them they are resources that can be used. Thus, both

teachers and pupils can go from one language to the next and back naturally and smoothly and thus use them when a need occurs.

The opinions about the use of English as a medium of instruction at primary level vary among teachers in both regions. Some teachers are clearly in favour, they believe that it is helpful for the learning process of the pupils. Other teachers are not convinced that it helps. According to them it can even harm the learning of other languages because it takes away instruction time off the other languages and also because some pupils need more reinforcement in the two languages already taught before they can start being taught through a third one.

Language use outside the classroom is different from inside. In both regions the teachers are more “relaxed” about the separation rule outside and they allow pupils to use another language than the classroom language with them. The main reason is that pupils identify the teacher with a language which is not always the language they teach them. For example, in the case of English the pupils know very well that their teacher also speaks Basque or Frisian (and Spanish or Dutch) and they do not have to continue trying to speak English. In case a teacher teaches the dominant language Dutch or Spanish, but is actually a Frisian or Basque speaker, sometimes it turns out to be harder for the pupils to address to their teacher using the classroom language. Language seems often to be more person bound than situation or location bound. In such cases, some teachers report that they allow their pupils to use the minority language in informal situations. It is also known that in Friesland pupils often continue to speak Dutch to the teacher because it is the dominant school language. Language use practices among the pupils themselves depend on the sociolinguistic context and on the mother tongue. In areas where the dominant language, either Dutch or Spanish, has a stronger presence, the pupils tend to use it more as a peer group language than in areas where the minority language is stronger. However, the teachers are not constantly reminding them which language they need to use because as the teacher in both regions say, the pupils can get tired and may even end up disliking the language.

As far as the language teaching strategies are concerned, the teachers in Friesland and in the Basque Country seem to focus mainly on oral communication, in particular oral production when teaching English as a foreign language. For teaching English the activities they select are more dynamic than when teaching Dutch/Spanish or Frisian/Basque. English instruction comprises activities such as songs, short plays, movies, and games. In contrast, when teaching the dominant or the minority language, the teachers in both regions focus more on aspects such as written production, correctness of grammar and spelling. The activities are less dynamic and more traditional. It seems that correctness of spelling is less important for teachers in English than in the other two languages.

As could be seen in chapter 6.4 the teachers do not seem to agree on the most important skill to learn. Some emphasize more oral skills, whereas others point to the importance of reading and writing. It became clear that the four skills – listening, reading, speaking and writing - are all covered and practiced during the lessons. As was seen in chapter 5.4, the teachers in both regions follow a textbook and use additional material when needed, such as photocopies or technological aids. Most current methods start from a text

or a short story from where other activities emerge in order to cover all four skills. Speaking seems to carry special importance since the teachers insisted that being able to communicate is very important.

The teachers in both regions also use a variety of corrective techniques, such as going over the most important errors on the board for all pupils to see, asking other pupils for the correct form as soon as a mistake is made, or asking the pupils to correct their peers' work either in pairs or in groups. They also use implicit techniques such as repeating with the correct form or reformulating a sentence.

The evaluation of the progress of pupils in language learning of the three languages is predominately done through "continuous evaluation" in the Basque Country and using more often a formal test in Friesland. At the same time there are important differences between the three languages in Friesland. Whereas testing concerning the Dutch language happens at very regular intervals because there are included in the methods and there are tests of the national testing agency CITO, for English usually there are six exams per year related to the units of the method but for Frisian there are not even formal tests.

The second research question was:

- Which challenges and needs do teachers face in the multilingual classroom of primary education?

Not unexpectedly, it became clear that there are many challenges and needs that teachers face when they want to achieve a high level of multilingualism among their pupils. Here some of the main challenges are summarized.

A common challenge in the Basque Country and in Friesland, mentioned frequently by the teachers, is the lack of good reading habits of the pupils. Many teachers complain that their pupils read very little or not at all outside the school. The lack of reading results in problems with vocabulary and with spelling, but also in the quality of oral and written production. Thus a main problem the teachers face is the improvement of speaking and writing skills under these sub-optimal circumstances.

An important challenge for these primary school teachers is how to respond to the demands of parents and society (chapter 6.2). In part this is related to the minority language: the demand for Basque is strongly felt, whereas there is hardly a demand for Frisian from the parents. It is clear that to start teaching English at an early age is a demand parents make of the schools; that is even felt stronger in the Basque Country than in Friesland. Thus most schools in the Basque Country start at the age of four (sometimes even three). In Friesland this is not common yet and most children start in primary school at the age of 10 or 11, but there is a trend to start earlier.

The introduction of teaching one or more subjects through the medium of English was also in response to the demand from parents and society. It has created important challenges for the teachers and for the schools (see chapter 6.5). Often it is not clear who should teach the subjects through English: in some schools they assign an English teacher and in other schools it is the subject teacher who has (or has to obtain) a sufficiently high

level of English proficiency. The last few years, many teachers in the Basque Country have started to improve their English or go to English classes to achieve a level required to teach in English. Similarly in Friesland, teachers show concern about their own level of English proficiency and are worried if they can teach through the medium of English. They see a need for themselves as teachers to have a sufficiently high proficiency level.

Another challenge that the implementation of English as language of instruction has created in the Basque Country is the need for more teacher collaboration and coordination as was seen in chapter 5.2. This challenge is less common in Friesland, because the schools are on average smaller and thus there are few parallel groups of the same level in primary schools. As a consequence there are fewer teachers per school and thus there seems to be more focus on collaborating as a whole team in Friesland.

One of the needs of the language teachers, which is often repeated by teachers during the interviews, is further improvement of the multilingual programme. These programmes are in place, but they are not designed well enough to serve the needs of their pupils or the demands of the parents and society. First of all, the teachers believe that a multilingual programme should not be “one size fits all”, but it should be designed specifically for each school, for example, better taking into account the sociolinguistic context. Many teachers mention the sociolinguistic context as an important factor, that is, when the context does not stimulate the pupils to use the target language(s) outside the school, then it becomes a school language only and it is not easy to improve the proficiency level or to achieve the final targets. Therefore, they see a need for more custom made multilingual programmes.

Another need these teachers mention is the improvement of teacher training programme, which is the undergraduate teacher training programme. They all are convinced that the training they received could have been more complete (see chapter 4.3). The interviewed teachers feel that they got a lot of theory but too little practice. Moreover the theory they were taught was not always applicable to the real job. Nowadays, most of the teachers in the Basque Country and in Friesland take additional in-service courses to continue their training, especially because they need to be up to date in current method, new technologies and other current day issues. The English language is according to them a popular subject to get training on.

An important need, only in Friesland, is to get up-to-date textbooks or other teaching materials to teach Frisian. The current materials do not allow them teach other subjects through the medium of the minority language. Many Frisian teachers express a need for modern Frisian language methods and textbooks.

8.1 Future research

The information collected and presented in this report gives rise to two new research themes that could be investigated in future studies.

Theme 1: Multilingual programmes

The relationship between the sociolinguistic context and the appropriateness of the multilingual programme in place in a school could be analysed in more detail. The teachers and headmasters showed their concern about the programmes they currently have in place as the most appropriate programme for their pupils to become fully multilingual and to master at least three languages at the end of obligatory secondary education. Some schools in the Basque Country already have adapted the multilingual programmes to their own needs. A future study could also investigate the outcomes of such adaptations and see if the sociolinguistic context really influences the outcomes. In Friesland there are schools that have implemented a trilingual education programme and others start to offer English at an early age, the outcomes of those different types of educational programmes could be compared in more detail.

Theme 2: Teacher training

The teachers expressed serious concerns about the quality of the existing teacher training programmes as preparation for the reality of the classroom and so the undergraduate studies necessary to become (language) teachers could be analyzed in that respect. The graduate degrees offered by the different universities in both the Basque Country and in Friesland could be studied and compared, on the one hand the general teacher degrees and on the other focusing on how training takes place for the different languages: minority, majority, English and specific teacher training for the relations between the languages.

Appendix: the interview protocol

Background information of the teacher

General: (some personal details)

- Age, year of graduation, years on the job, nr of different schools
- Teaching which classes (groups)
- Pre-service training: quality, strong and weak points
- In-service courses taken
- Live in same community as school
-

Language related:

- First language
- Language skills (all languages) all 4 skills
- Biography of languages (experiences with languages during life time: e.g. also how hard/easy it was to learn in secondary; stays abroad; family members with different language background; holidays abroad: which languages spoken there by others)
- Did you obtain special training for bilingual education?

Organization – work

General:

- How many pupils in the school; + your class
- How many teachers in the school (all full-time or FTE and number)
- How often do you have meetings? As team, or pair of colleagues, and what do they discuss
- Relationships among colleagues (autonomy versus collaboration)
- Who designs curriculum? Autonomy in executing/implementing?
- Which text books are used
- Who decides on textbooks, how often new ones bought
- Availability of technology: computers? Digital board?
- In-service training available (about what), encouraged?
- Role of parents in school (reading mothers)
- To which secondary schools (levels) do children go? (Percentages for levels)

Language related:

- What is the formal/official language policy of school
- Language aims (as in school work plan)
- Role of language coordinators (if any)
- Importance of language versus other subjects
- Integration of three languages?

- Number of immigrant children? (which languages?)
- Need for additional training on language related issues?
- Wishes own development further skills (language related)
- What would you like to do differently with language teaching?
- Contact with parents (about language(s))?
- Do you know language of fathers and mothers of each child?

Ideology – language beliefs

- Goals of language learning: levels to be achieved
- Is aim to be native (so Frisian/Basque speaking child sounds as average Dutch/Spanish child outside FRL/BAC; also writes equally as average Dutch/Spanish child outside FRL/BAC)
- Use of Frisian as medium of instruction (do they use it, how they feel about it)
- Use of English as medium of instruction (idem)
- Opinions on codeswitching by children, by themselves
- Rank-ordering importance skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing (for 3 languages)
- Importance of literacy skills (reading & writing) in different languages
- Importance of fluency and sounding natural
- Importance of advisory service for language teaching
- Opinion on teaching other subjects through English (CLIL), immersion (children with different language background, e.g. Dutch through medium of Frisian, Spanish through medium of Basque)
- Ideas on teaching/learning through another language
- Role of inspectorate vis-a-vis language learning
- Influence of home/parents of the children
- Influence of society: TV, games,
- Main/biggest difficulties with Dutch/Spanish of the children
- Idem Frisian/Basque
- Idem English
- What are obstacles and facilitators for learning languages?
- What is for them successful multilingual education?
- Advantages & disadvantages of multilingualism
- Advice for a new/young colleague about learning language(s)

Language practices

- Language use in classroom: general rules, actual practices
- Teach 4 skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing (for three languages) (how)
- Teach linguistic levels?: phonology, lexicon, syntax, pragmatics/discourse
- Use of method(s)/learning materials

- How much emphasis on written work (try to get %% or hours?)
- How much emphasis on oral work (try to get %% or hours?)
- Follow textbook or own strategy/pattern?
- Use of additional materials (photocopies)
- Use of digital materials (digi-school)
- What are most useful teaching techniques for languages
- Use of techniques such as 'corrective feedback', 'recasts'
- Do you use translation exercises?
- Importance of norms
- How important is correct spelling
- Do you focus on Frisian/Basque loans?
- Do you allow for code-switching?
- Can children answer back in other language than the medium of instruction at that moment?
- Do you distinguish between language to whole group and individually to pupil?
- Do you use different language inside the classroom and outside?
- Do you translate e.g. difficult Frisian word to Dutch? Idem English word to Dutch?
- Dealing with different home-languages (differentiation)
- Do you teach language awareness? Exercises?
- Teach about language situation in FRL/BAC (or NL/ES or Europe)?

Testing

- How is progress of pupils measured?
- Marks on report card?
- How to do quality control for individual pupils or group as whole
- What are the Main challenges to achieve goals for language(s)
- Which is the language of the test itself?
- Are exams in one language only or do you allow for other languages?
- When a pupil mixes language in written work, how do you evaluate that?
- And in oral work (e.g. presentation, or discussion); Feedback from secondary schools on levels in languages?

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