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# Immigrant students' minority language learning: an analysis of language ideologies

Elizabeth Pérez-Izaguirre <sup>a</sup> and Jasone Cenoz <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Didactics and School Organization (DOE), University of the Basque Country, UPV/EHU, Donostia/San Sebastián, Spain; <sup>b</sup>Department of Research Methods in Education (MIDE), University of the Basque Country, UPV/EHU, Donostia/San Sebastián, Spain

## ABSTRACT



This paper focuses on language ideologies in relation to identity in Basque secondary education, in a context where the teaching of a minority language is part of the curriculum. More precisely, it addresses the views held by teachers and immigrant students in relation to Basque, which is a minority language in the Basque Country. The aim is to analyse these views in their discourses both separately and in interaction. Methods include documentary analysis, participant observation, individual interviews and focus groups. Results indicate that there are engrained ideologies indexing identity in tension: those of teachers as Basque supporters and those adopted by students as Basque detractors, which come into conflict during classroom interaction when it involves learning Basque. The article concludes that these two ideologies constitute opposing identities and provides educational guidelines to improve classroom dynamics when acrimonious interactions such as these occur.

## KEYWORDS

Basque education; language ideologies; identity; immigrant students; teachers

## Introduction

This paper is part of a larger ethnographic study analysing educational inequalities between autochthonous and immigrant students in a secondary school of the BAC. Another publication has addressed how learning and speaking Basque mark school integration and capital (Pérez-Izaguirre 2018). However, immigrant students in this study showed a lack of motivation to speak Basque and, according to the teachers and the observations carried out in this study, acted disruptively anytime it was involved in classroom interaction, by contrast to autochthonous students, who actively used it in classroom hours. In this paper, we will focus on the language ideologies held by immigrant students in comparison to those of teachers in that school. Language ideologies refer to implicit and explicit subjective ideas and assumptions that individuals hold about languages and the social world (Gal and Woolard 2001; Woolard 1998). Language ideologies have also been related to processes of identity construction, as identities are often defined by the

**CONTACT** Elizabeth Pérez-Izaguirre  [elizabeth.perez@ehu.eus](mailto:elizabeth.perez@ehu.eus)  Faculty of Education, Philosophy and Anthropology (HEFA II), Department of Didactics and School Organization (DOE), University of the Basque Country, UPV/EHU, Plaza Oñati 9, 20018 Donostia/San Sebastián, Spain

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language(s) we speak and the ideas we hold about them (Fought 2011). More precisely, this study focuses on the views expressed by immigrant students and their teachers about Basque and its learning, as well as on the identities they relate to. In this paper, we will examine the intersection between Basque as a minority language and the relationship between immigrant students and teachers. Basque is a minority language but it is worth mentioning that it is reinforced school. This objective addresses the relationship between speakers of minority languages, immigrant minorities and majorities in a given society. The study focuses on a specific context but some of the trends observed can be relevant for other European contexts where local minority languages such as Welsh, Catalan, Corsican or Frisian are used in education. The context described in this study also shares some characteristics with regions where minority languages are used outside Europe.

The situation of Basque must be contextualised within a broader historical and political spectrum, as it was prohibited to speak and teach the language until the 1970s in Spain. Only when the Statute of Autonomy of the BAC was approved in 1979, did Basque acquired an official status, according to its article 6 (Official Gazette of Spain, 1979). Since Basque acquired legal status, the Basque administration has promoted the language and it now has a significant status in some spheres (Echeverria 2003, 2010; Gorter, Zenotz, Etxague, and Cenoz 2014). For instance, numerous festivities and social rituals take place in Basque. In addition, many offers of employment in the BAC demand a minimum proficiency of Basque (Urla 2012). In line with these revitalisation efforts, education practitioners have promoted its teaching and use. In a general level, it is worth mentioning that the sociolinguistic surveys carried out in the BAC every five years indicate that only 9.3% of the population who is older than 16 hold a negative attitude opinion towards the promotion of Basque (Basque Government, 2019).

In such a complex linguistic panorama, the language ideologies of immigrant students who do not support Basque clash with those of education practitioners. In this paper, we will analyse these views and make some recommendations while considering the educational implications of these dynamics for the academic functioning of multi-ethnic and multilingual Basque education.

## Language ideologies and identity in multilingual settings

Language becomes an important ethnic marker in multi-ethnic and multilingual environments and acquiring a language reinforced by society – or languages – is related to the process of becoming a competent member of that community. Conversely, a lack of proficiency in the language(s) reinforced by the host society and studied at school could be related to a lack of school success (Cummins 2015; Heller and McLaughlin 2017; Weber 2009).

Inequalities between students from diverse ethnic backgrounds have been analysed in relation to the concept of language ideologies (Arya, McClung, Katznelson, and Scott 2016). These are affected by emotions, beliefs and values, and bring about specific linguistic behaviours and indicators that have different consequences in academic contexts (Leeman 2014). For instance, Allard et al. (2014) analyse the differing language ideologies held by Latinx-descended students and their teachers in two schools in the USA. Their results indicate that distinct language ideologies are related to the different educational outcomes of Latinx immigrant students, depending on their age of arrival in the US, and their relationship with teachers.

Linguistic indicators in language ideologies can also index ethnic groups, that is, some ethnic groups can be related to specific language ideologies. For instance, in Higher Education, Garrett and Gallego (2014) have described the differing ideologies by home and international students at a Catalan University: while home students favoured teaching and speaking Catalan in academic contexts, international students resisted to speak it (see also Newman & Trenchs-Parera, 2015). Hence, language ideologies may index the identifying characteristics of an ethnic group by contrast to others. In the following lines we will explore how social interaction helps to construct such framework of identity.

In this paper, we will consider identity as being formed in interaction at two related yet different levels. First, we will consider a subject-centred perspective, which proposes that linguistic interaction needs to take place in order for there to be identity formation. That is, language acts as the channel through which identity is formed at an individual level. Second, we will examine how identity is formed via social interaction in multilingual settings, as languages do not only act as channels for interaction in multilingual environments, but they may also index distinct identities in relation to each of the languages involved. At an individual level, Erikson (1989, 2000) explains that self-reflection is needed for identity formation and subjects need to observe themselves through the lens of the community. According to Erikson (1989), adolescence is precisely the stage of development in which individuals begin to question aspects of their lives and rebel against them. For instance, teenagers question the importance of societal rules. Eckert (2002, 2004) also contributed to the field of adolescent behaviour in relation to language and identity. Her work illuminates how rebellious behaviour is used by teenagers in America in order to differentiate themselves from the rest. According to Eckert (2004), adolescents construct their identity in this process of differentiation, as they internalise institutional and social rules by rebelling against them. She adds that in the case of immigrant groups this process is even more complex, as their reference group is not only the host society, but also their own ethnic background.

Current research focusing on immigrant students' identity analyses the discourse created around them in multilingual societies where they are often disadvantaged in comparison to their autochthonous counterparts because they do not master the reinforced language(s) in the education system (Choi 2017; Cummins, Hu, Markus, and Montero 2015; Kaplan and Chacko 2015; Shohamy 2017; Weber 2009). Norton (2013) proposed an analysis of the educational practices involving the teaching of the host society's language to immigrant students and used the concept of investment to describe how these students 'invest' their time in learning the target language. Investing in learning the target language is supposed to help immigrant students gain power and capital in the host society, which in turn affects their self-understanding and, hence, their identities. However, according to Dervin and Norton (2014), in some cases ethnic minorities 'invest' in the target language, while others do not. This seems to indicate that the motivation of these students to learn the target language is dependent on their position and expectations in the host society. Similarly, teacher identities in multilingual educational contexts have often been analysed from a power relations perspective. However, in this case, teachers are portrayed as the holders of ideologies that align with a monolingual and native-speaker point of view. These ideologies indexing teacher identity usually imply that educators are not fully inclusive of immigrant and/or ethnic minority students' home languages (see Choi 2017; Flores and Rosa 2015). Taking into account all the points mentioned

above, the research questions we intend to respond to are: (1) How are students' language ideologies and identities displayed in the classroom? and (2) What are teachers' and directors' reactions to students' behaviour related to Basque?

## The study

As mentioned, Basque is a minority language in the BAC but most instruction in compulsory education is in Basque. In other words, whereas the main language spoken in the streets of the BAC is Spanish, Basque has a considerable power in compulsory education. However, this situation is relatively new, as Basque was banned in the education system until the 1970s (Cenoz 2009).

These language shifts have had an impact on public opinion and Basque is a sensitive matter for the Basque community (Echeverria 2003, 2010; Kashmir 2002; Martínez 2014; Urla 2001, 2012). Although a thorough description of the linguistic and cultural panorama in the Basque Country is beyond the scope of this work, we must mention that Basque is a strong yet non-consistent ethnic marker among autochthonous people. We use the term non-consistent since for some individuals, speaking Basque defines being Basque; for others, being Basque is defined by living or being born in the Basque Country. This seems to indicate that language does not necessarily index a particular identity. Similarly, the language ideologies related to the language in question may neither be directly related to a person's identity.

In any case, the Basque education system has a clear position in this respect. As Echeverria (2003) demonstrates, the idea that schools in the BAC more or less directly promulgate is that the Basque language marks Basque community-belonging. Hence, the language ideologies held by most education practitioners in the BAC are supportive of Basque and reinforce its learning as a way to protect the ethnic specificity and identity of the Basque Country.

However, the ethnic specificity of the Basques must be relocated in a growingly multi-ethnic and multilingual environment, as the BAC has, in recent years, received an appreciable amount of immigrant population. For instance, statistics show that 8.4% of the studentship in the public education system was immigrant in 2015 (Luna, 2016). Nevertheless, this percentage is not proportionally distributed across all of the BAC. While some schools have a low proportion of foreign nationals, others have a high concentration of ethnically diversified groups. The reason for this imbalanced distribution is related to the structure of Basque academic institutions. The Basque education system is structured into three linguistic models: In model A, the instruction is in Spanish and Basque is studied as a subject; in model B, students are instructed both in Spanish and Basque; and in model D, instruction is in Basque and Spanish is studied as a subject. In areas of the BAC where Spanish is the main spoken language in the public sphere, immigrant pupils tend to study model A or 'light' model B, meaning that Basque language instruction is very low (Etxeberria and Elozegi, 2008; Intxausti, Etxeberria and Joaristi 2010; Martínez 2014). By contrast, autochthonous students tend to study model B or D regardless of the area of the BAC in which they are located, in line with Basque language revitalisation efforts. Hence, the choice of a linguistic model has important consequences for children, as it determines the ethnic group with which students are most likely to integrate (Etxeberria and Elozegi 2008, 2010; Martínez 2014; Muñoz 2015).

Similarly, in the areas surrounding schools that have this imbalanced multi-ethnic distribution, many autochthonous parents enrol their children in privately-owned but state-funded schools, as they believe that a high proportion of ethnically diversified students decreases the level of Basque instruction for their children (Etxeberria and Elozegi 2008, 2010; Save the Children 2016). In the 2015/2016 school year, this ethnic distribution imbalance was remarkable in more than 60 Basque public schools (Fernández de Argániz 2016).

### **Research setting**

The secondary school where the fieldwork took place was located in a town that had five public schools and four privately-owned but state-funded schools. There is no streaming of students into ability-based classes in the BAC and the school participating in this research study had students of mixed ability in all the classes. Different options such as vocational training or university-oriented upper secondary school are open to all students. This school was located in a Spanish speaking area of the BAC and was one of the few places in the area in which a clear ethnic division appeared. It also had a considerable ethnic distribution imbalance (Fernández de Argániz 2016; Fernández Vallejo 2016; Sotillo 2016). The imbalance was such that teaching staff designated the school an ‘immigrant school’. In the 2015/2016 school year, this school was composed of 32 teachers and 207 students, of which 37% were foreign nationals. There were 13 different classes divided into linguistic models B and D. Specifically, in each grade there was one model D, one model B in which Basque and Spanish were more or less equally instructed, and another model B class where Basque instruction was lower.

Observations were carried out in three groups of the second year of secondary education, but the focus in this paper will be on the one that was most disruptive according to teachers and we will call it 2Z. Disruption in this context refers to the act of interrupting classroom dynamics. In general, the characteristics of group 2Z complicated teacher-student relationships in different ways: First, the group was composed of a majority of immigrant students who could not speak Basque. Second, students composing 2Z opposed learning Basque even though it was compulsory. This act directly contradicted what Basque schools tend to reinforce: the acquisition of Basque as a minority language that needs revitalisation. And third, their academic performance was low in comparison to other groups of the second year of secondary education and teachers were discouraged, since they could not advance according to the syllabus. Group 2Z was chosen as it shares some characteristics with analogous groups and schools, according to educational reports (Luna, 2016).

### **Methodology**

We chose the aforementioned school because it was a secondary school that had a high immigrant ratio. These two characteristics enabled the study to take an immigrant and adolescent student sample, in line with the aim of this study: studying language and identity in multilingual and multi-ethnic Basque secondary education. An ethnographic approach was chosen, following Hammersley (2018) and Barley (2014), to analyse daily school life and interactions within, which have implications for identity theory. After an

informal meeting with the Head of the School in spring 2015, we concluded that the data were going to be collected by the first author, who presented herself as an ethnographer and teacher assistant. Following Mangual Figueroa (2011), this enabled the ethnographic game between the insider and outsider positions in the education setting, which facilitated gaining research participants' trust. In this study, the ethnographer's role in the eyes of the students and teachers was to help them in class and observe their behaviour and attitude. Her attitude was open to students' personal stories of migrations and linguistic attitudes both in their home and host countries. The fact that the ethnographer was a Basque who self-identified as such, and whose mother language was Spanish, enabled the adoption of such an intermediate position of understanding the difficulty of learning Basque for students, but also the need to reinforce it in the education system. This position obviously affected classroom dynamics, as students were aware of it but felt confident enough to express their opinions about it, which enabled a fruitful data collection.

### Participants

The class in which most of the fieldwork (2015/2016) was conducted was composed of 19 students of many ethnic origins, most of whom were immigrants. These students were in the second year of secondary education, aged 12–14. The following table shows the country of origin of the students in 2Z who were born outside Spain ( $N = 15$ ) and their age of arrival in the BAC.

As represented in Table 1, there were 15 students born outside Spain coming from a variety of countries. Their age of arrival in the BAC also varied from less than a year to 13 years. The four students who were born in Spain had different origins: one was born outside the BAC and had arrived when she was 11, another was born in the BAC, and two students were also born in the BAC but were part of the Roma community. In terms of Basque acquisition and integration within the Basque community, all immigrant students were in the same situation: they hardly spoke Basque and integration with the local community was limited. In line with the aims of this paper, we will focus on the students of immigrant background in 2Z.

### Data collection

In terms of data collection, there were four phases in the fieldwork that took place between spring 2015 and summer 2016. Previous to the observation, we focused on a historical and sociological compilation and analysis of documents to understand current aspects of

**Table 1.** Country of origin of students born outside Spain in 2Z ( $N = 15$ ).

Country of origin	<i>n</i>	Age of arrival in the BAC
Ecuador	$n = 7$	0–12
Nicaragua	$n = 3$	9–12
Colombia	$n = 1$	13
Peru	$n = 1$	13
Bolivia	$n = 1$	7
Bulgaria	$n = 1$	12
Portugal	$n = 1$	12



immigration phenomena and the use of Basque in the town where the school was located. This enabled researchers to contextualise the specific multilingual and multi-ethnic environment they were going to work in. Second, participant observation started in September 2015. Following Woods (1987, 2012) and Spradley (1980), we proposed an observation that aimed to analyse how interactions between teachers and students took place while taking into consideration the intersection between different ethnic origins and languages. The systematic collection of such academic interactions enabled us to classify those that took place between teachers and students involving diverse language ideologies. Observations indicated that the use of Basque was mostly limited to doing exercises. Even if teachers' idea involved teaching different areas of the language, such as literature or history, this was almost impossible. There were a few opportunities in class to speak about Basque culture aimed to reflect on the overall meaning of the language for these students as non-speakers. These talks were often conducted in Spanish to ensure the understanding of the content being explained. The researcher in the field was present during classroom hours and recesses two days per week and also took part in field trips and school activities. She was partly integrated with the teaching staff, something that allowed her to have an intermediate position between students and educators. The ethnographer also had contact with students and teachers outside classes.

Third, early in 2016, interviews were carried out to complete some of the gaps that were present during the observation. Twenty interviews were conducted with students and sixteen with teachers, which in most cases provided us with a great insight into the language ideologies and attitudes of the students in 2Z, teaching staff, Head of the School, and Head of Studies. The topics covered with students included their moment of arrival in the BAC, attitude and motivation to learn Basque, relationship to teachers, and general attitude towards the Basque Country. In the interviews conducted with teachers, their relationship to immigrant students, previous experiences teaching this audience, encouragement to teach Basque, and personal attitude towards Basque were discussed. The data obtained in the interviews enabled a deeper exploration of the discourse of each party involved in the academic interactions (Marvasti 2010; Woods and Hammersley 2017). Fourth, in spring 2016, three focus group discussions were conducted with six to eight students in each. These were especially useful to understand group dynamics and intersubjective discourse construction between students about the learning of Basque. Each student's influence on the group's functioning and the discussions about these enabled us to better understand their view on their relationships with the teachers in relation to Basque (Morgan and Hoffman 2010).

### **Analysis**

Analysis of the data collected was completed using a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis package, Atlas.ti software. Data from the observation were transferred into a field diary, interviews and focus groups were fully transcribed and data from the documentary analysis were also written up in a document. All the documents were converted into an RTF file and the results were categorised into families of codes that brought about a final classification in terms of the language ideologies involved in academic practice and those present in student and teacher interactions and discourse.



## Results

This section will be organised according to the research questions. More precisely, the first section will address the language ideologies and identities displayed by students in the classroom, while the second will focus on teachers' and directors' reactions to student behaviour in relation to Basque.

### *Language ideologies by immigrant students in 2Z*

In order to answer the first research question, several examples will be given to show the language ideologies of immigrant students in 2Z. In Examples 1, 2 and 3 we will present three student-to-teacher interactions that occurred in 2Z. In these interactions, the language ideologies portrayed both by teachers and students differed and conflicts appeared in classroom dynamics. Later, in Examples 4 and 5, we will provide interview data conducted with two immigrant students. These examples were selected because they show precisely the kind of conflict analysed in this paper. Many of these examples involve Perla, a student whose voice was the most heard in 2Z. It should also be mentioned that even when Perla was not involved, these views persisted.

#### *Example 1*

The first example was observed in the Technology class of 2Z involving the learning of Basque in two different sessions that took place in February and April 2016. Although Technology was supposed to be instructed in Basque, this was hardly ever the case, as according to observations immigrant students usually acted disruptively anytime Basque was mentioned during the lesson. However, the Technology teacher, Ane, always tried to teach some words in Basque in spite of protests by students. In the session that took place in February 2016, Ane had prepared an exam for students. The contents of the exam were written in Spanish and students were expected to write their answers in Spanish too, but Ane had decided to ask for students' personal information in Basque. The exam had the following words written in Basque:

Izen-abizenak [Basque] First and Last name Data [Basque] Date
--

According to the observations as recorded in the field notes (FN), as soon as Perla received the exam, she asked what the meaning of these words was. Perla had become well known among teachers for her complaints about learning Basque. Ane later revealed that she thought Perla understood these words, as personal information in many school documents was requested in Basque, but translated them anyway.

In April 2016, Ane prepared another test for group 2Z and the same kind of interaction took place: as soon as Perla read the first phrases of the exam, which had the same heading as the exam in February, she asked Ane for the meaning of the words in Basque. Ane, who had become used to these interactions by Perla, translated them to Spanish after sighing heavily (FN).

The language ideologies by the two parties involved in this interaction differed: on the one hand, Ane aligned with the idea of reinforcing Basque in spite of the difficulties of students in 2Z to speak it. She aimed to use some words in Basque and asking for the personal information in exams in Basque was part of that duty. On the other hand, Perla tried to avoid learning Basque and portrayed herself as a student who could not understand any word in Basque. However, that was most likely not the case, as according to observation, she filled in similar documents for other purposes and did not need to ask for their meaning of words in Basque. Hence, the linguistic ideology held by Perla was not supportive of Basque. A similar kind of interaction occurred a few weeks later, as shown in Example 2.

### Example 2

The following interaction also took place in a Technology class in April 2016. Ane was explaining a fact in Spanish and asked students, in Basque, to choose among four numbers in an exercise. As Perla often more or less directly opposed learning Basque, Ane asked Perla to answer the question, probably expecting to get a positive response from Perla to a very simple question.

- Ane: Perla: bat, bi, hiru edo lau? [Basque]  
 Perla: one, two, three or four?  
 Perla: Ba ... (She wanted to say 'bat,' but she couldn't) [Basque]  
 Ane: Bat, bat! ¡pero dílo bien! [Basque and Spanish]  
 One, one! Say it properly!  
 Perla: Pero es que yo hablo bien, yo hablo español. [Spanish]  
 I do speak properly, I speak Spanish.  
 Ane: Yo también hablo bien. [Spanish]  
 I speak properly too.  
 Perla: No, pero tú hablas en otra lengua ... [Spanish]  
 No, but you speak in another language ...  
 Ane: No ... me ... [Spanish]  
 Don't ...

The situation in this linguistic exchange differs from the usual attitude by Perla, as Ane received an answer in Basque and that was rare. Perla tried to say 'bat' (one) in Basque, but couldn't pronounce /t/ at the end of the word because of her Nicaraguan accent. Indeed, she did not know how to pronounce the last consonant in the majority of words and she was not consciously saying 'ba'-. In this sense, Perla's first reaction to the request in Basque to the teacher was positive, while Ane wrongly interpreted Perla's mispronunciation as a lack of effort in speaking Basque. She was probably defensively reacting to Perla's previous open dislike and constant complaints about learning Basque when she said 'say it properly'. The response by Ane portrays a language ideology that involves the protection of Basque, which she felt was misspoken at that point. In reaction to Ane's defensive position, Perla's next sentence implied that speaking Basque is not speaking properly, as speaking properly is only speaking Spanish, at least in such a context. This last sentence is finally interpreted by Ane as the undermining of Basque. Indeed, the language ideology by Perla is bluntly negative as she undermines its importance and status in an academic environment. A similar situation is shown in Example 3, where immigrant students interact with the Basque teacher.

**Example 3**

This example shows a common daily interaction in a Basque language session which happened in May 2016. In this classroom, there were the 2Z students who showed the highest competence in Basque. Boycotting the Basque teacher, Manuel, was the most marked element of these sessions. Boycotting in this context means interrupting classroom dynamic as a direct or indirect way of discomfort. According to observation, the boycotts that transpired during Basque lessons did not happen in other subjects, and could imply that these boycotts occurred because Basque was being instructed while students did not invest in its learning.

- Juan: Manuel, me siento mal. [Spanish]  
 Manuel, I feel sick ...
- Manuel: (Ignoring Juan's complaint) Txanoa ... kendu ... [Basque]  
 Remove ... your hat ...
- Juan: No, que me siento mal, tío. [Spanish]  
 No, I feel sick, dude.

(Agustín starts to whistle and Eguzkiñe follows Agustín's lead)

- Manuel: Amaia, hau egin behar duzu ... (Ariketa bat) [Basque]  
 Amaia, you have to do this ... (An exercise)
- Amaia: ¡Ay! que ya acabé ... [Spanish]  
 Ah! I already finished!
- Manuel (To the whole class): Nota txarra jarriko dizuet ez duzuelako irakurri (ariketa) [Basque]

I'm going to give all of you a low grade because you haven't read it (the exercise)

- Perla: (Responding to Manuel's accusation) ¿Me va a decir que no he hecho (el ejercicio)?  
 ¡Si no ha venido (a ayudarme)! ¡A mí hábleme en español, que no le entiendo (en euskera)! Siempre hablando sin saber, usted ... [Spanish]

Are you trying to tell me I didn't do (the exercise)? But you didn't come over (to help me)! Talk to me in Spanish because I don't understand (Basque)! You're always speaking without knowing ...

We can highlight four elements from this exchange. First, many school rules were defied at the same time: Juan did not remove his hat in spite of the order by Manuel, and called him 'dude' in a friendly but ironic way. Meanwhile, Eguzkiñe and Agustín started to whistle and Manuel felt he was losing authority over the students. Second, Manuel tried to gain control of the group and became defensive, giving a specific order to Amaia, another student. Although Amaia had not even started the exercise she had been told to do, she said she had finished it, implicitly not accepting the order by Manuel. Third, Manuel got even more defensive and tried to gain authority by threatening to lower the students' marks. Perla rebelled against his position in a defensive reaction, claiming that she had done the exercise and demanding to be spoken to in Spanish, while they were in a Basque language subject. She defied Manuel, the Basque teacher, and implicitly undermined the use of Basque. Although the rest of the students did not openly demand to be spoken to in Spanish, they did not speak to Manuel in Basque, which involved detractive ideologies of Basque, against that of Manuel, who tried to teach and reinforce the learning of the Basque language during Basque lessons.

In Examples 4 and 5, we introduce excerpts of interviews conducted with two immigrant students in 2Z. These students were both Latinxs and were chosen as their discourses were often repeated by the rest of the immigrant students in 2Z. It should be noted that both of these students were especially straightforward in their discourse when referring to Basque, while other students were less blunt when expressing their negative attitudes towards Basque.

#### **Example 4**

In the following quote, we introduce the discourse by Juan, a Bolivian student who had arrived in 2009 in the BAC, when asking about his view on Basque and its learning.

Juan: Entiendo bien lo que me dicen (en euskera), pero es que no me gusta hablarlo [...] porque no me gusta, no sé ... no me atrae. No me gusta.

I understand what I am told (in Basque), but I don't like speaking it [...] because don't like it. I don't know ... I'm not attracted to it. I don't like it.

The ideology held by Juan expressed his dislike towards Basque. He explained he could understand it but did not like it and did not feel attracted to it as a language. This view clashes with school curriculum, according to which, Basque should be taught and reinforced at school.

#### **Example 5**

In this example, Amaia, who was from Ecuador, expressed similar views to those of Juan. More precisely, she mentioned the following:

Amaia: El euskera ... es que no sé, es que no me gusta. Para mí, pienso que no sirve para nada el euskera, o sea para cuando me vaya a Ecuador no se utiliza euskera, sólo en el País Vasco [...] Pero otro idioma, como el italiano sí me serviría, porque es más importante [Spanish].

I don't know ... I don't like Basque. In my opinion, it is not useful and when I go to Ecuador Basque will not be useful. It is just useful in the Basque Country [...]. However, another language, such as Italian, would be useful for me, as it is more important.

In this quote, Amaia also held a negative ideology about Basque, its use, and its usefulness. In line with Juan, she openly expressed her dislike towards Basque, and mentioned that its use was confined to the Basque Country. Her comments implied that Basque was not important to her, as later she mentioned that on future trips to Ecuador, Basque would not be useful before comparing it to other European languages, such as Italian. An implication of this idea is that Basque was not worth being learnt because it was not practical or useful at an international level. By contrast, teachers did not relate Basque to their practicality, but to culture and identity.

### ***Teachers' and directors' reactions to students' Basque ideologies***

In order to answer the second research question, we will provide four examples extracted from interviews conducted with teachers and directors. Each example corresponds to interviews conducted with the Head of School, Head of Studies and two different teachers. Education practitioners always tried to make the school function in Basque. This not only involved classroom interaction, but any interaction that took place on school grounds.

Immigrant students were encouraged to learn Basque, based on the argument that Basque would provide them with a new worldview which would enable their integration. However, these efforts were unsuccessful as immigrant students never felt Basque was an opportunity for integration. Conversely, they interpreted Basque as a school obligation and thought that Spanish would enable communication in Basque society.

### Example 6

This excerpt is part of an interview conducted with Marta, the Head of School, early in 2016. Marta explained how this school managed linguistic and ethnic diversity and she described their response to a request by Ecuadorean parents to enrol their child, Mateo, in a class with predominantly Spanish instruction. The response by the school had been negative, as they considered that Mateo was competent enough to study some subjects in Basque.

Marta: Guk ... ikusten baldin badegu daukagula ikasle bat ahal duela euskaraz ikasi, eta aurrera egin, pues sartzen degu hor (B eredu sendoan). Adibidez, orain Mateoren gurasoak, ez dakit, 3–4 aldiz esanez: “Nahi dugu semea ikastea gazteleraz”. Eta guk esan genion “ez!” O sea ... hau egin ahal du euskeraz eta aterako da hemendikan 2 hizkuntzekin (euskara eta gazteleraz) [Basque and Spanish].

*If we consider that a student can study in Basque, we place him/her in strong model B. For instance, the parents of Mateo came to say, “We want our child to be instructed in Spanish.” And we told them, “No!” I mean, he can do it in Basque and he is going to finish his compulsory education speaking two languages.*

The implicit language ideologies in this excerpt differ. On the one hand, the school administration worked for the reinforcement and protection of Basque as a minority language. To this aim, they encouraged Mateo, who had minimum Basque knowledge, to take on a high level of Basque instruction, regardless of his ethnic origin. On the other hand, Mateo’s parents’ ideology tended towards the reinforcement of Spanish, regardless of the minority status of Basque and Mateo’s language competence. Indeed, the reasons for students’ negative attitudes towards Basque could be related to their families’ or close social networks’ ideas towards the language. As mentioned, some parents did not agree with the fact that students had to study Basque. Hence, their lack of competence in the language could be influenced by such an attitude.

### Example 7

This excerpt is part of an interview conducted with the Head of Studies, Leire, also in 2016. In this interview she explained from her point of view how the school had to manage the negative views of Basque by immigrant students in 2Z and their families.

Leire: Jo, baina es que gu saiatu ginen 2Z taldeko gurasoekin, hitz egiten (euskararen ikasketaren inguruan) [...] A ver, euskera ikasteak ez dio kalterik egiten (edozein ikasleri), justu kontrakoa, hemen bizi behar baldin badu, eta baldin badarama 10 edo 12 urte, hemen bizitzen, jarraitzen badu hemen, euskera ondo etorriko zaio. (Baina 2Z ikasleen gurasoek esaten dute) “Jo, baina beste hizkuntza bat da, baina ...” Jarrera ezkorra da (haien) etxekoa [Basque and Spanish].

We tried to speak about Basque learning with the parents of student in 2Z. Well, learning in Basque does not damage these students. On the contrary, if students have been living here for 10 or 12 years, Basque will be good for them. However, these parents say, “Well, it’s an additional language ...” They hold a negative view about Basque.

The language ideologies present in the discourse by Leire are those present in Example 6. While teaching and reinforcing the instruction of Basque was the aim of the school, parents of immigrant students in 2Z were not disposed towards the learning of Basque. In Leire's words, parents held a negative attitude towards the teaching and learning of Basque to their children, as they viewed Basque as an additional language they had to learn, not as the opportunity of learning a minority language that needed reinforcement.

### Example 8

In line with the discourses of Examples 6 and 7, during an interview conducted in April 2016, Manuel revealed that he felt quite demotivated when teaching Basque to immigrant students in 2Z, as they held such negative views toward learning it. He mentioned the following:

Manuel: Nik egunero ahaleginak egin behar ditut sartzeko gela horretan (2Z) oso motibazio gutxi ikusten dudalako (ikasle etorkinengandik) [...]. Zergatik (dute) jarrera negatibo, hain jarrera ezkorra (euskararekiko)? [Basque]

Every day I need to make an effort to teach class 2Z because these students are not motivated [...]. Why do they hold such negative views towards Basque?

In this excerpt, Manuel explained that immigrant students in 2Z held detractive attitudes towards the learning of Basque, which led to his lack of motivation. He revealed that as a Basque teacher, it was difficult to teach in such an educational environment. That did not come as a surprise, as his job was precisely to teach the language that was being devalued during lessons by most members of 2Z.

### Example 9

In this example, we introduce a quote by Luisa, a Biology teacher in 2Z, who explained why she thought immigrant students in 2Z held these ideologies towards Basque learning.

Luisa: Arrotza bezela hartzen dutelako euskera [...] (2Z-ko ikasle etorkinek esaten dute) "ustedes son vascos, ustedes son vascos, vosotros sois vascos. Gu ez!" [...]. Ordun hor, jai daukagu [Basque and Spanish].

It's like this ... they are strangers to Basque (language)[...](Immigrant students in 2Z say) "you are Basque, you are Basque, you're Basque. We're not!" [...] There's nothing we can do.

Luisa's quote summarised how most teaching staff interpreted 2Z's attitude towards the Basque Country and the Basque language, according to data collected during participant observation and interviews. An implicit idea expressed in this quote is that when students in 2Z interacted as strangers to Basque, teachers interpreted it as a refusal to become part of the Basque community. Moreover, these students' defiance of the rules regarding Basque learning disturbed teachers because they destabilised the linguistic hierarchy at school, as shown in Examples 2 and 3.

## Discussion and conclusion

Academic interactions as shown in this case of highly diversified multi-ethnic Basque education reveals the complex language ideologies of the different parties involved. Taking

into consideration that Basque is a minority language and acts as a marker of Basque academic community-belonging, education practitioners in this school held language ideologies that supported the use and reinforcement of Basque. In contrast to previous studies where teachers hold monolingual ideologies (see Choi 2017; Flores and Rosa 2015), teachers in this study supported the learning of both Basque and Spanish, but strongly encouraged a higher level of instruction and interaction in Basque. For them, promoting the Basque language at school was important and most understood that their role as teachers was to transmit Basque to students. By contrast, the group of students this research focused on did not feel motivated to learn Basque. These students were immigrants and their most marked characteristic was their open dislike of Basque. Some students, such as Perla, undermined its learning or tried to avoid speaking it. Anytime Basque was involved in an interaction, these students acted disruptively or defied teacher authority. In this sense, the language ideologies of these students were not supportive of Basque.

These differing views and practices about Basque at school had profound consequences both on student-to-teacher relationships and on each of the parties alone. First, not learning Basque worked to the detriment of these students, as Basque is a reinforced language in the BAC and not investing in its learning decreased their opportunities of integrating in different social areas such as social rituals, activities and getting a job.

Second, according to the theories of language learning and identity as stated by Dervin and Norton (2014), students in this study did not invest their time and energy in learning Basque, often under the pretext that it would not be useful for them in the future as it was a minority language. In such a multi-ethnic and multilingual environment, interaction did not happen in Basque due to student choice and such an attitude indexed an identity resistant of Basque. This corresponds to the findings by Newman and Trenchs-Parera (2015) and Garrett and Gallego (2014) in Catalonia, where immigrant and international students show lower support towards Catalan than autochthonous students.

All in all, identities in relation to language ideologies: supportive ideologies of Basque were those of teachers, whereas detractive ideologies of Basque were those adopted by immigrants. Hence, two well-established identities could be observed: that of teachers as Basque speakers and promoters, and that of immigrant students in 2Z as challengers of Basque. An implicit idea of such a detraction and rebellion against the promotion of Basque is that immigrant students worked against the language ideology of the academic institution, actively disobeying the (institutional) rules established and promoted by education practitioners. These rebelling and defying practices could be considered as transgressions against the rule of promoting Basque. Following Erikson (1989, 2000) and Eckert (2002, 2004), transgressions could be viewed as the linguistic interaction within which adolescents distinguish themselves from adults. In other words, transgressive behaviour could represent teenage behaviour or the questioning of rules made by adolescents, which in this case happened in a multi-ethnic educational environment related to Basque learning. Third, the clashing language ideologies from students and teachers that were present in the academic interactions indexed opposing identities. Such opposition was marked by the promotion or refusal to learning Basque, which is a sensitive matter for many Basque people.

However, such interactions and language ideologies involved not only indexed a simple question of being or not Basque, but a multilayered and complex stories of being an ethnic



minority in a setting where majority and minority languages coexist. More precisely, in this paper we highlighted the complex situation of student ethnic minorities being reluctant to learn the minority language, which is reinforced by the education institutions.

The case study presented in this paper shows the complexity of academic interactions in multi-ethnic and multilingual environments focusing on the analysis of language ideologies present in academic practice. More precisely, in this study we have explored the relationship between language ideologies and identity in multi-ethnic and multilingual environments and have addressed their consequences in daily academic interaction. In response to our research questions, we argue that: (1) students' language ideologies towards Basque index identities that oppose Basque and (2) teachers' and directors' reactions to these ideologies clash with them, as they reinforce and protect Basque as a minority language. We also stated that the language ideologies held by teachers were those of the Basque education administration, coherent with school rules, whereas those by immigrant students transgressed such a rule. It has to be acknowledged that as these students were considered disruptive by teachers from the beginning of the academic year the tensions and misunderstandings may have been reinforced. A limitation of this research is that it does not analyse the relationship between policy level discourse, the discourse in the classroom and the discourse among/within individuals. Further research should focus on the discussion between language ideology and economic utility of the language, as directly expressed by immigrant students in this study. This would also help clarify whether the language ideologies held by these students were only a manifestation of adolescent identity as a transgression or rebellion against school rules or whether they consolidate during adulthood, creating a consistent identity indexed by language ideologies detracting from Basque.

This paper also provides education stakeholders with evidence to interact with students of immigrant backgrounds who might hold language ideologies that do not support minority languages. Based on the results of this study, we consider that teachers should be aware of these and work towards decreasing their impact on classroom dynamics. Working on transforming negative ideologies of Basque into positive ones could be a key factor to decrease educational inequalities and enable a better integration of immigrant students.

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**ORCID**

Elizabeth Pérez-Izaguirre  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4787-6723>

Jasone Cenoz  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9000-7510>

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