

***Dragon Ball* on the Basque public TV: influence on viewers' language attitudes and practices**

Abstract

Dragon Ball was highly popular among different generations in the Basque Country. The anime TV series was broadcast in Galician, Catalan and Basque practically at the same time in 1990. The translation and dubbing into Basque has been widely praised, in which one of the remarkable characteristics is the high use of the informal form of address *hika* in the first seasons. *Hika* has undergone a dramatic decrease in the last decades in most places of the Basque Country. This study seeks to examine whether *Dragon Ball* has to some extent influenced viewers' opinion towards Basque in general and *hika* in particular and whether they believe having watched the TV series has increased their language use concerning Basque and specifically *hika* forms. A short questionnaire composed of numeric and narrative items was spread via social networks all over the Basque Country and according to the 5,966 responses collected in a three-week period, *Dragon Ball* was not only important in terms of symbolism but also concerning language ideology and use. The results show that media can play an important role in minority language contexts, even though new technologies will make it even harder.

Keywords: Basque, *hika*, *Dragon Ball*, TV, language attitudes, minority language.

1. INTRODUCTION

The effect of media on language has been a long-debated issue and it remains unclear to what extent we can talk about a cause-effect relationship. If we place the debate in the specific ground of minority languages, the issue becomes even more intricate as most of the viewers' input still tends to be in the majority language. As we will discuss, some have questioned the possible influence on language exerted by a single programme, but here we analyse a very special example that hooked a whole generation of Basque children and teenagers in the 90s, which is the anime series *Dragon Ball*. Right after 30 years the series was first broadcast on the Basque language public television channel ETB1, this retrospective study seeks to shed light on the debate whether media may have an actual impact on language attitudes and use. We focused on Basque but also on a specific feature of it, namely the informal form of address *hika*, widely used in the Basque translation of *Dragon Ball*.

1.1 The effect of the media on language

How the media can affect language has been investigated from different perspectives: the variationist view has delved into the impact of the media on certain language features used by the speakers within the same language; others have focused on minority language contexts to explore the influence of the media in minority language use, which usually refers to sociolinguistic change rather than language change.

It has been taken for granted that mere exposure to television can have an impact on language, but this idea has been heavily contested lately. The studies that have dealt with viewers' exposure to media and their language use have not been able to show any clear direct cause-effect relationship (Stuart-Smith, 2011; Stuart-Smith *et al.*, 2013). Confirming or dismissing such influence is not a simple task, as social behaviour in general and language attitudes and use in particular are subject to many different and interrelated factors which makes it extremely complex –if at all possible– to explore media influence independently (Androutsopoulos, 2014a; Tagliamonte, 2014). It seems that social behaviour is influenced by media, “but the nature, intensity, duration, and even the description and investigation of these effects is disputed” (Stuart-Smith *et al.*, 2013: 507).

Different studies have suggested that this effect might be limited to certain characteristics. According to Stuart-Smith (2011), variationist sociolinguists have concluded that media can have an impact mostly on vocabulary; nonetheless, speakers seem to use this new lexicon consciously and it is hardly integrated in the natural repertoire. Androutsopoulos (2014a) listed four ways in which media consumption can contribute to a sociolinguistic change: the process of large-scale spread and circulation of media phrases; the role of media engagement in shaping the interaction order; the use of media quotes in order to create common ground and enable people to construct themselves as members of a community; and the processes of conventionalization or routinization in terms of vocabulary and discourse. In relation to the latter, Lytra (2006) argues that media expressions are often like trends, but they can also settle if they are repeated for a long period of time. These typically include nicknames, metapragmatic discourse markers and expressive interjections.

One of the main factors that make experts hesitate about the alleged impact of media on language is the fact that there is no face-to-face interaction. Interpersonal accommodation seems to be a key aspect if language change is going to take place, and attributing such transformation to mere exposure to television programmes is regarded by many as overestimating the effect of the media (Androutsopoulos, 2014a). However, media influence can happen when viewers go beyond exposure and engage with a programme (Gunter, 2000; Stuart-Smith, 2011). As Coupland (2007) puts it, watching a favourite programme can be an intense experience, comparable to a real face-to-face conversation with some other person. Stuart-Smith *et al.* (2013) analysed the impact on language the popular English series *EastEnders* may have had on Glaswegian viewers, and those participants who engaged with the series showed an influence in certain language features.

Androutsopoulos (2014a) himself acknowledges that motivation and engagement from the viewer is essential for any effect to happen, and claims that we should adopt the notion of “engagement” rather than “exposure”. Based on Stuart-Smith’s (2011) results, Androutsopoulos (2014b: 243) concludes the following: “looking at media engagement practices is necessary as it is by now established that the bottom line of any potential impact

of media on non-mediated community speech is not consumption or 'exposure' per se but situated audience engagement with specific media narratives and characters."

Androutsopoulos (2014b) argues that the impact of the media cannot be measured based on the popularity of one single television programme, but as we have just seen, some relevant studies have been carried out considering one –very popular and influential– show or series. The cases of *Minder* (Trudgill, 1986) or the aforementioned *EastEnders* (Stuart-Smith *et al.*, 2013), among others, challenge that viewpoint. When viewers watch a programme over a long period of time, if they establish strong bonds with it and highly identify with some character(s), then it seems that it could affect their language.

1.2 The effect of the media on minority languages

In this subchapter we will look at sociolinguistic change, especially how minority media affects the use of that language. The importance of radio, television, newspapers and more and more notably the Internet for the survival and the development of minority languages is beyond question (Moriarty, 2014; Pietikäinen, 2014). Yet, the dimension of the role played by minority media is still quite uncertain. Fishman (1991, 2001) downplayed the role of media in minority contexts and did not consider them as one of the key factors that could help revitalise minority languages. Cormack (2007) claims that there is not enough evidence to conclude that such a direct link exists between minority media presence –or even consumption– and sociolinguistic change, and even if it did, we still do not know how that process actually takes place. What is more, he questions how that connection should be studied. He also supports the idea that a single popular programme does not necessarily influence language use in a diglossic context.

Related to this, Moriarty (2014) discusses the case of Irish and the television channel TG4. The results of her study show that the sole fact of having a TV in the minority language helps it become "cool" –especially– for young viewers, and therefore develop more positive attitudes towards Irish. Moriarty (2014) saw that the Irish-American comedian Des Bishop could work as an agent of sociolinguistic change. In this study 130 university students took part, and most admitted not using Irish at all in their everyday life. However, they almost unanimously agreed that TG4 plays an important role in promoting Irish. 7.4% stated that the channel contributed in either maintaining or improving their language skills, 12.5% said they spoke more Irish and 46.4% of the participants felt the desire of using Irish more due to the consumption of TG4. Qualitative analysis reinforces these figures, "albeit to a limited degree" (Moriarty, 2014: 474).

The mere existence of minority media helps to reduce the possible out-dated image of the language (Moriarty, 2014), but other authors have noted different benefits: still in the Irish context, O'Connell (2003: 60) focused on children and teenagers and thought Irish-language broadcasting was essential "for the initial transmission and repeated reinforcement of new terminology". Cormack (2007) himself acknowledged that one of the benefits of minority media was the development of vocabulary. Cormack (2013) also suggested that broadcasting could have an effect on immediate or longer-term language use but also on language attitudes, which could have a longer-term impact. Barambones *et al.* (2012) in the Basque context give account of the wide range of linguistic registers that are present especially on TV and how that can help viewers. They also mention the potential of media to disseminate vocabulary, certain expressions and structures, which are not usually easy to spread in minority language contexts.

All in all, we are forced to act cautiously when analysing the profits of minority-language media. As Cormack (2007) puts it, it is not at all proven that more media content in the minority language will contribute to the revitalisation of the language and, besides, the opportunities that new media technologies will create for minority languages will inevitably bring about a greater presence of majority language media. Even though some studies attribute some benefits, “the role that media can play in the more direct forms of language maintenance –that is, actually encouraging people to use a language– should not be over-estimated” (Cormack, 2007: 66).

1.3 Sociolinguistic context, the Basque public TV and *Dragon Ball*

Basque enjoys a co-official status with Spanish in the Basque Autonomous Community and the northern part of Navarre. In the whole Basque-speaking territory, according to the last survey, 28.4% of the people can speak Basque and another 16.4% have passive skills (Basque Government, 2017). The street use of languages is measured regularly and the last study showed that 12.6% of the people were speaking Basque on the street (Soziolinguistika Klusterra, 2017). These figures vary considerably depending on the area and the speakers' age. In the areas where Basque has an official status, the vast majority of students are enrolled in Basque-medium or bilingual schools, so most young people in those areas can speak Basque. We must bear in mind that the Academy of the Basque Language established the foundations of standard Basque (or *Euskara batua*) as recently as in 1968, and great efforts have been made to spread and develop it through the media, education and public administration.

The Basque public TV Euskal Telebista started broadcasting content exclusively in Basque in 1982 through the channel ETB1, immediately after the statutes of the newly born Basque Autonomous Community were approved. In 1986 the Spanish-speaking channel ETB2 was launched to offer a local perspective to non-Basque speaking viewers. Both channels are managed by the Basque Government, but some people from other parts of the Basque Country –namely Navarre and the French Basque Country- have also had access to it.

The large variety of channels launched in the last years and the Internet have had a dramatic impact on ETB1 audience, and although once quite popular, the share has barely moved around 2% in the last decade. According to the Basque Observatory of Culture (2019), traditional TV consumption has dropped considerably, but still 80.3% of the Basque citizens watch it every day in whatever language. Two figures are particularly relevant for the present study: the youngest age group (15-24) watches TV with the least frequency, and among Basque speakers 60% claim to watch TV in Basque.

According to Barambones *et al.* (2012), when ETB1 began broadcasting the written standard was 15 years old and the spoken standard had not been defined yet. The education system, the administration and also the media adopted the standard language and contributed to socialise the norms established by the Academy of the Basque Language. Thus, ETB1 has played a paramount role promoting and spreading standard Basque (Barambones *et al.*, 2012). This has happened thanks to the many successful programmes broadcast by the Basque language channel, including the case being examined here: the Japanese anime series *Dragon Ball*.

Santiago (2017) thoroughly described the *Dragon Ball* phenomenon in Spain. The Japanese series was popular in other countries, but the Spanish case seems to be unique. According to the author, the success “lies within the regionalization and extensive domestication of the product, especially in relation to the use of regional co-official languages in dubbing” (p. 126). *Dragon Ball* first appeared in Galicia, Catalonia and the Basque Country a few weeks apart in 1990, and it soon “became an unparalleled generational phenomenon” (p. 111), or more specifically, three independent social phenomena in each of the regions. Santiago (2017) explains that the anime series contributed to the awareness and acquisition of the co-official languages thanks to the exclusive and targeted adaptation. *Dragon Ball* was highly regarded by language professors and academics because it could help children and adolescents to use the co-official languages.

The Basque case perfectly fits in the description above; it quickly became extremely popular among those who were born between 1975 and 1990. Audience data leave little space for hesitation: *Dragon Ball* used to obtain a rating of 21.4% and a share of 70.3%, some days even reaching up to 77.6% (Ibañez *et al.*, 1999). As for the language used, the translation of *Dragon Ball* into Basque “shows a notable degree of formality in terms of lexicon and morphosyntax”, as Barambones (2012: 43) pointed out regarding cartoons dubbed in Basque overall. One of the most remarkable features of the Basque text is the wide use of *hika*. *Hika* is the informal address form of the Basque language, but it has fallen into disuse in most parts of the Basque Country in the last decades, and it is nowadays the marked option in basically all dialects (Alberdi, 2018), especially in the standard variety. Although this form of address remains current in some areas of the Basque-speaking territory (Muguruza, Bereziartua & Etxeberria, 2020), however its future is uncertain to say the least. The recent standardisation process of Basque and the fact that most people learn Basque at school –and not naturally at home or in the street– seem to be factors that play against its recovery (Alberdi, 2018), because non-native speakers find it difficult to engage in *hika* conversations for various reasons (Bereziartua & Muguruza, 2020).

Hika consists of the use of the second-person singular personal pronoun *hi* –in opposition to the more formal *zu*–, which affects verb inflection. Besides, the addressee’s gender is encoded in the verb even when the addressee is not an argument of the verb (more on allocutivity in Alberdi, 2018). Table 1 shows an example of how verbal morphology works depending on the form of address (and gender, in the case of *hika*).

Table 1. Examples of the forms address *zuka* (formal) and *hika* (informal).

I gave you a present. (non-allocutive)	Opari bat eman dizut . (Zuka)
	Opari bat eman dinat . (Hika, with a female addressee)
	Opari bat eman diat . (Hika, with a male addressee)
They gave me a present. (allocutive)	Opari bat eman didate . (Zuka)
	Opari bat eman zidaten . (Hika, with a female addressee)
	Opari bat eman zidatek . (Hika, with a male addressee)

Hika is usually related to informal speech, which is also linked to local dialects of Basque. Therefore, standard *hika* is still struggling with naturalness and social acceptability. It should be noted that the standard forms of *hika* were established as recently as in 1994. However, Barambones (2012) observed that it is used both in original and translated products, and he considers *hika* as “one of the main tools Basque has at its disposal to imbue audiovisual texts with features of informal spoken register” (p. 167). This is a crucial issue not only for this study but also for audiovisual translation in minority language contexts in general. De Ridder and O’Connell (2018) argue that it is not enough to use a minority language in the media but close attention needs to be paid to the kind of language and translation mode that is used regarding several aspects: standard versus dialects and formal versus informal registers, among others. They also highlight the importance of the decisions made by audiovisual translators of minority languages: considering minority language viewers are usually more exposed to translations rather than to original products, translators’ choices “may have implications for the ongoing development of such languages” (p. 406) In that sense, research into audiovisual translation is of paramount importance regarding sociolinguistics and language planning.

2. THE STUDY

Dragon Ball was first broadcast on ETB1 30 years ago, and this anniversary has given many different agents food for thought. Also, in the light of the new 2019 movie *Dragon Ball Super: Broly* that was dubbed into Basque and released in cinemas with considerable success, there were interviews on the media, opinion articles, social media interaction, etc., most of them reminiscent of the social phenomenon that took place in the 90s, and how it might have had a positive impact on the attitudes and use of Basque within the so-called *Dragon Ball generation*.

2.1 Aims and research questions

This whole project has two different objectives: firstly, we sought to raise awareness on the importance of media for Basque in general and *hika* in particular; secondly, we wanted to carry out an empirical research by collecting a large amount of data in order to go beyond folk wisdom and personal beliefs.

As for the study itself, we will examine the impact *Dragon Ball* could have had on viewers’ attitudes and use of Basque –based on their own perception–, and we will also focus on the specific feature of *hika*, considering its recurrent utilisation in the Basque adaptation. We formulated two research questions to tackle this issue:

- RQ1: Did *Dragon Ball* affect language attitudes regarding Basque in general and *hika* in particular according to the participants?
- RQ2: Did *Dragon Ball* affect language use regarding Basque in general and *hika* in particular according to the participants?

2.2 Research tools

We collected all the data through a questionnaire written in Basque with both numeric and narrative items. It consisted of three short sections: first, participants answered three background questions (age, birthplace, and gender); then, there were seven questions directly

related to *Dragon Ball*. The questions are shown in Table 2. Finally, we left a blank space for any other contribution participants were willing to make.

Table 2. Second part of the questionnaire with numeric items related to *Dragon Ball*.

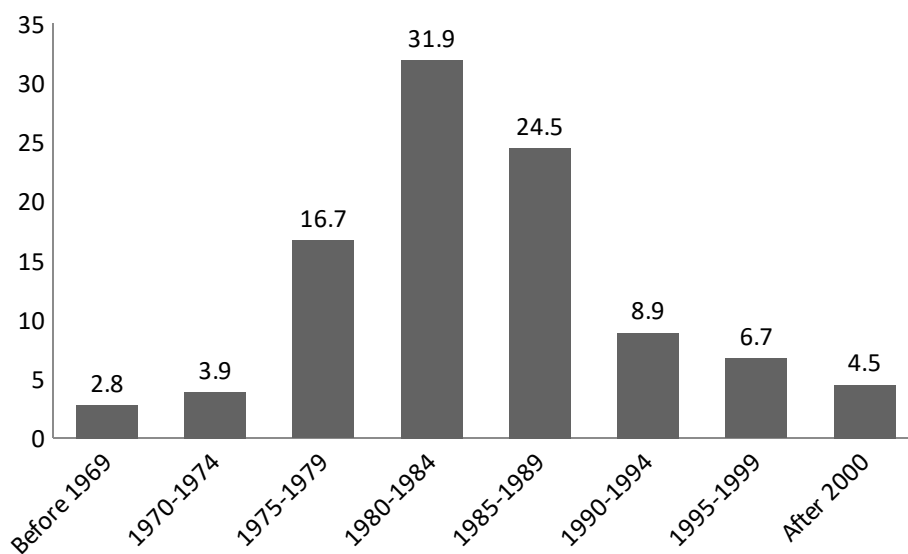
Question	Possible answers
1. Do you have the habit of speaking Basque? 2. Do you use <i>hika</i> ?	Yes/A little/No
3. Would you consider DB a referential programme when you were young(er)? 4. Did DB help you have a (more) positive attitude towards Basque? 5. Did DB make you use (more) Basque? 6. Did DB help you have a (more) positive attitude towards <i>hika</i> ? 7. Did DB make you use (more) <i>hika</i> ?	Yes, absolutely/Yes, to some degree/No/I don't know

2.3 Participants, data collection and analysis

Once we designed the questionnaire, we spread it via social networks. Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp were used to reach as many people as possible. Those who responded do not represent a random sample, but we must bear in mind that the side goal of this study was to socialise both the issue of *hika* and the importance of Basque media offerings on language attitudes and use.

In a three-week period 5,966 people answered the questionnaire. The size of the number provides evidence of the social phenomenon *Dragon Ball* once was. Even though the last open item was optional, we gathered 993 narrative answers (16.6% of all respondents), and hundreds of them (n=372; 37.4% of the total amount of narrative answers) are rather significant and will be shown here. Six out of ten respondents were male and, as expected, most were born between 1975 and 1990 (73.1%). More precise data are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Percentage of participants in each age group.



Although the sample is biased, digital data collection allowed us to reach people from all over the Basque Country. The majority of people who took part comes from the provinces of Gipuzkoa (60.1%) and Bizkaia (25.8%), because it is in those areas where most Basque-speaking people live.

Almost nine out of ten participants regarded *Dragon Ball* as a referential programme of their childhood or youth, and admitted using Basque very often in their everyday life. So we can conclude that it was regular Basque-speaking *Dragon Ball* fans who mainly participated in this study. As for the Basque informal address form, results are not that clear-cut: only a quarter of the participants (25.2%) said they usually speak in *hika*, 21.7% use it now and then, and over half of them (53.1%) do not use it at all.

Once all the data was collected, descriptive analyses were carried out to ascertain how *Dragon Ball* had influenced the participants' language attitudes and use. We used SPSS 17.0 for data analysis. Regarding narrative answers, we used Atlas.ti 8 for content analysis and to categorise all the comments. Two researchers independently coded all the content and then contrasted the outcome to present a more reliable set of data. We grouped them into nine different categories: 1. Praise for *hika* (n=86; 23.1%); 2. Praise for translation and dubbing (n=73; 19.6%); 3. Personally no effect but could be beneficial (n=62; 16.6%); 4. *Dragon Ball* as an oasis for *hika* (n=58; 15.5%); 5. Enriching vocabulary (n=45; 12.1%); 6. Using more Basque (n=41; 11%); 7. Compliment for the research (n=26; 6.9%); 8. Transmitting values (n=10; 2.6%); 9. Others¹ (n=621). Once the categories were defined and all the comments sorted, the most relevant responses were selected to substantiate previous numeric data. The code after each comment makes reference to the participant number and their age group.

3. RESULTS

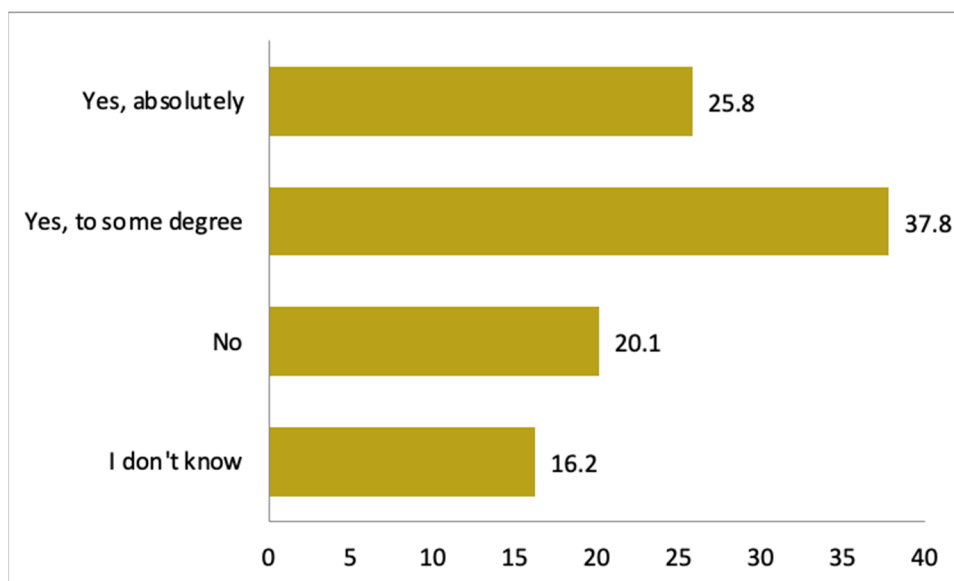
We will show the results divided into two sections according to the aforementioned research questions. Both numeric and narrative data will be combined. Participants' comments are all translated from Basque into English, and we added their code and age group after the text.

3.1 Did *Dragon Ball* affect language attitudes regarding Basque in general and *hika* in particular according to the participants?

As we can see in Figure 2, 63.6% of the participants reported having (more) positive attitudes towards Basque thanks to having watched *Dragon Ball*, albeit most of them in a moderate way.

Figure 2. Percentages of self-reported effect *Dragon Ball* had on participants' attitudes towards Basque.

¹ The comments that fell into the category "Others" were mainly random expressions used in *Dragon Ball* and parts of the lyrics of the opening song. Therefore, as they did not contribute much to our study, we did not take them into account when working out the percentages. It should also be noted that the total sum of the relative percentages makes over 100% because some comments contain more than a single idea and have been included in two categories.



In mostly Spanish-speaking contexts where the use of Basque tends to be restricted to the school area, *Dragon Ball* might have helped naturalising the use of Basque, feeling it more familiar. Some of the comments shed more light on this issue:

I think *Dragon Ball* had a great and positive effect on my use of Basque. It helped improve my level of Basque. Besides, it also made my attitudes towards Basque become more positive. My town and surroundings are not very Basque-speaking, but through *Dragon Ball* I saw the practical use of Basque (outside school and related to leisure). (P_1257, 35-39)

It created an unequalled model of Basque (...), it made young people have fun in Basque, and showed them that Basque can be familiar and living. (P_2995, 35-39)

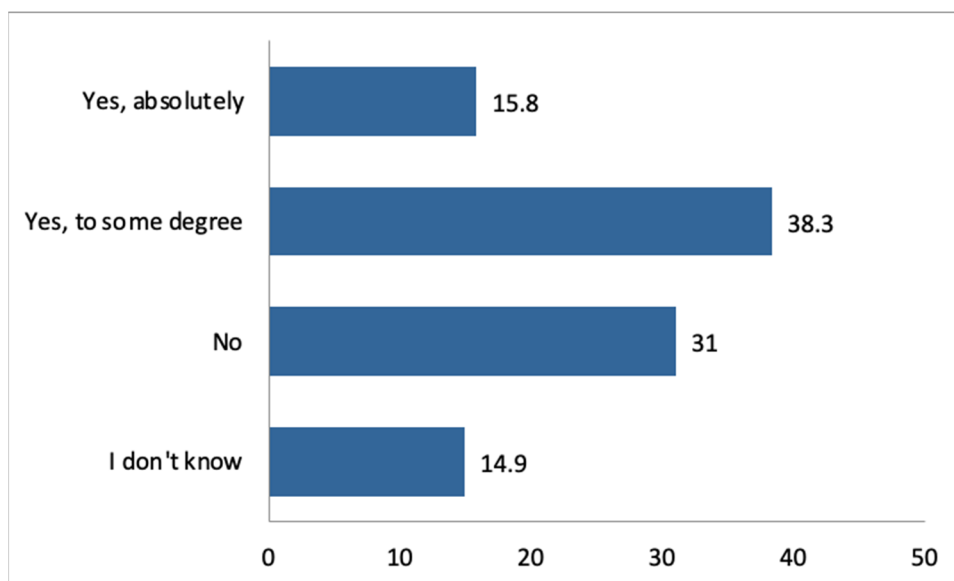
20.1% of the respondents said that *Dragon Ball* did not help in this respect, but we must take into account that most of them live in Basque-speaking areas where Basque remains the natural language of communication, and it is likely that they already hold positive attitudes towards Basque. The following comments support this idea:

The opinion and perspective I have towards Basque is not a consequence of cartoons. Having watched *Dragon Ball*, *Doraemon*, etc. in Basque was very interesting, but it didn't change my ideas in any way; as a matter of fact, I have always lived in a very Basque-speaking environment. (P_2856, 20-24)

I assume it did have some effect on a higher use of Basque and *hika*, but I don't think it was my case, as luckily I was born in a really Basque-speaking town and family. (P_3957, 30-34)

Figure 3 shows the results obtained in relation to *hika*; those who claim that their attitudes towards *hika* improved a lot thanks to *Dragon Ball* fell to 15.8% and the participants who felt that the series exerted no influence in them increased to 31%. However, we still see that 54.1% of the participants consider *Dragon Ball* had a positive influence regarding their attitudes towards the Basque informal form of address.

Figure 3. Percentages of self-reported effect *Dragon Ball* had on participants' attitudes towards *hika*.



There are plenty of examples among the narrative answers that explain these figures with some of their nuances. Many participants state that *Dragon Ball* was an oasis for the use of *hika*, as they did not hear it much around them on a daily basis.

Being from San Sebastian, I guess I first heard *hika* in *Dragon Ball* and I grew fond of it... And I also learnt a lot. (P_2019, 35-39)

Young people do not use *hika* around me, but I would say that thanks to *Dragon Ball* and other series/films *hika* doesn't sound completely strange for people. (P_665, 25-29)

I learnt all I know about *hika* watching *Dragon Ball*. (P_4860, 35-39)

A few participants mentioned *Dragon Ball's* contribution to the dissemination of standard *hika* forms, which are not so commonly heard:

It wasn't common to listen to the standard model of *hika* in the media, and I'd say *Dragon Ball* helped normalise it. (P_7, 40-44)

It helped me become familiar with standard *hika*, and I'm capable of using it now. (P_11, 35-39)

Among those 31% that considered *Dragon Ball* did not have an impact on their attitudes towards *hika*, two logical reasons are outlined in the participants' texts. On the one hand, for many viewers *hika* is present in their daily life and many of them even use it quite often, so they would not depend on a TV programme to bear more positive attitudes.

I speak in Basque and in *hika*, but *Dragon Ball* had no influence in that. However, no doubt having such high quality cartoons in our language was enriching. (P_87, 35-39)

It had no impact on me, because I have always heard *hika* on the street (especially *toka* [male form of *hika*]). Nonetheless, I look at it the other way around: the fact that *Dragon Ball* was in *hika* made me feel the series closer (P_2028, 30-34)

Others reported that, due to the fact that they were too young and did not have a well-developed metalinguistic awareness that was mature enough, they did not even realise that *hika* was used among the many characters in the series.

If it wasn't for this questionnaire, I wouldn't have even noticed that characters spoke in *hika*. When I was a kid I didn't even realise. (P_4527, 25-29)

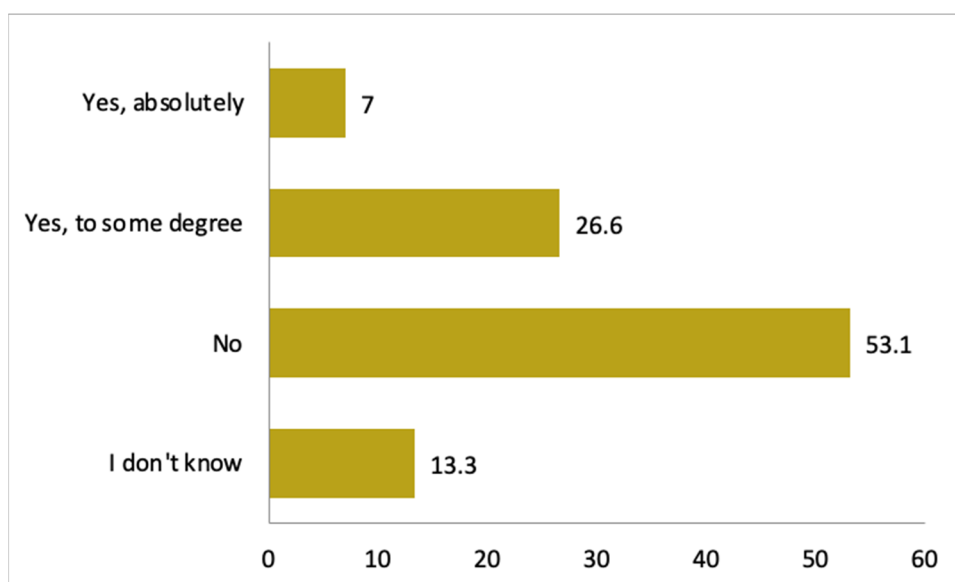
I never noticed *hika* was used in *Dragon Ball*. (P_519, 35-39)

We collected quite diverse responses partly because of the different language backgrounds of the participants, but *Dragon Ball* was an important source of input for most of them; what is more, it seems that it was the only source for many viewers. All in all, it seems that from the participants' perspective the language of the series, namely Basque, had a bigger importance than a given specific feature as it is the case of *hika*. They were more aware of the language they spoke overall than of the use of a different personal pronoun and its derived verbal forms that some characters used (to address some, but not all, of the characters).

3.2 Did *Dragon Ball* affect language use regarding Basque in general and *hika* in particular according to the participants?

Now we will go on to show the answers regarding the self-reported effect on the use of Basque that may have been fostered by having watched *Dragon Ball*. The data in Figure 4 manifest a modest influence: 7% said that *Dragon Ball* directly influenced their use of Basque, and 26.6% thought that this cause-effect relationship is limited. The rest either did not see any influence or was not sure about it.

Figure 4. Percentages of self-reported effect *Dragon Ball* had on participants' use of Basque.



The comments we selected provide a better understanding of the percentages and give us more insights on the issue.

A few participants clearly identify a higher use of Basque in general due to the consumption of the popular anime series. Here is an example:

Dragon Ball, for the many kids that lived in Spanish-speaking areas, apart from helping to greatly enhance our linguistic wealth, it also normalised playing in Basque. Even though I don't use *hika*, watching *Dragon Ball* doubtlessly contributed to its comprehension and internalisation. It is undeniable that *Dragon Ball* influenced the language use of several generations. (P_3748, 30-34)

Many others make nuances in this alleged increase in the use of Basque. Numerous participants claimed that they learnt plenty of vocabulary, especially insults, colloquial expressions, and other miscellaneous words. A lot of them also emphasize that they actually used them.

Dragon Ball showed me expressions and words in Basque that I had never heard: *zekena!* [idiot] *Barrabana!* [naughty boy] *Aizak txotxo* [hey kiddo], *zitola!* [miserable] and so on and so forth. (P_5888, 40-44)

We also learnt cursing in Basque with *Dragon Ball*: *madarikatua* [damn you], *arranopola* [damn it], *mukizu* [brat], *deabru halakoa* [you devil], *alua* [cunt]...and many more. (P_287, 35-39)

We have always tended to speak in Basque in Markina [a town from the province of Bizkaia], but it's true that *Dragon Ball* has had an effect on us. Some sentences and words have remained in our dictionary forever. Not so much on use (we speak Basque all day anyway), but certain specific sentences or words. (P_4318, 35-39)

ETB1 broadcast an episode of *Dragon Ball* every evening, so it was common that on the next day at school children and teenagers discussed the latest events. The comments corroborate this trend, and apparently many of them switched to Basque when doing so. Speaking in Spanish when they imitated their favourite characters would have been awkward.

When talking about *Dragon Ball* we always spoke in Basque. We still find it weird to listen to these series in another language. (P_566, 35-39)

I didn't watch it, but especially my male classmates did, it was very present in our classroom, and when we were 14 I remember they mostly spoke in Spanish, but they would switch to Basque when they talked about *Dragon Ball*, because they included specific expressions. (P_391, 40-44)

Many comments written by the participants seem to be far-fetched, but they might be indicative of *Dragon Ball*'s impact and of a profound belief that the series had a major positive influence in their language achievement.

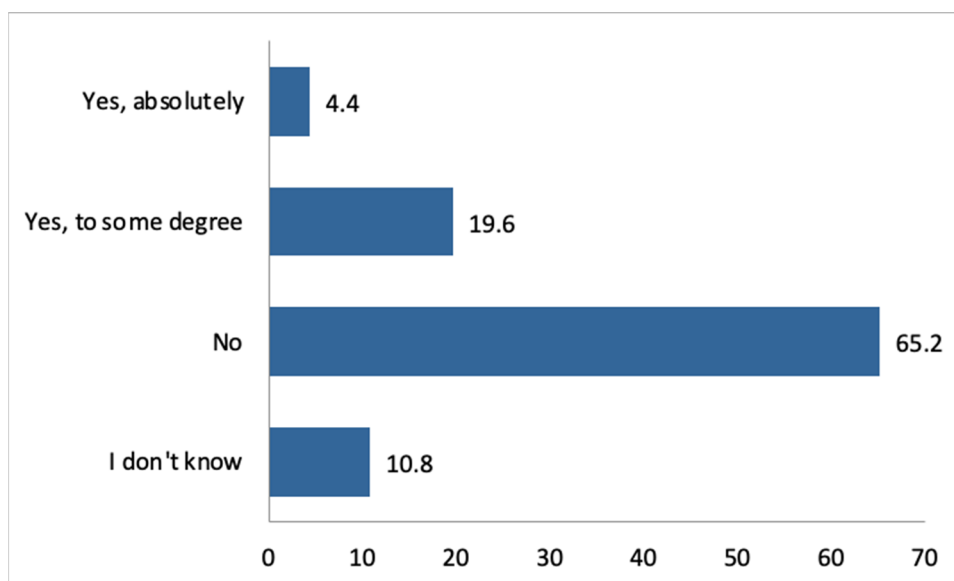
Madarikatua desagertu! [damn you, disappear!] These were my first two words in Basque. (P_5369, 40-44)

I got the EGA [Basque C1 diploma] by watching *Dragon Ball*. (P_1720, 30-34)

As for the use of *hika*, participants perceive even a smaller influence: one out of four participants thinks that having watched *Dragon Ball* may have somehow made *hika* be more present in their language practices, but only 4.4% believes that effect to be important. Two

thirds of the participants believe that they did not speak *hika* more as a consequence of having been viewers of *Dragon Ball* (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Percentages of self-reported effect *Dragon Ball* had on participants' use of *hika*.



In any case, it is worth scrutinising the comments concerning this issue. Some of those who gave positive answers are everyday *hika* speakers whereas others may only use it now and again, and they all may have chosen the same option from very different perspectives. There was essentially no answer reporting a persistent and normalized use of *hika* that was produced by the influence of the anime series. However, a more modest use is registered among many; quite a few respondents wrote about starting to use *hika* while “playing” *Dragon Ball*, performing the different characters and their most recurrent expressions.

When we were kids we would play cartoons using *hika*. That was the only exception. (P_4768, 30-34)

Even if I don't speak in *hika*, when I was a child I watched Vegeta, Goku and the others speaking like that. When playing I think I used their expressions (*madarikatua, txikituko haut, ez haiz hain errez libratuko...*) [using *hika*: damn you, I'll destroy you, you won't get away so easily...], but just for laughs. Such good memories!!! (P_291, 30-34)

It is evident that the effect in terms of production is low, as both quantitative and qualitative data show. Yet, many participants confirm that they acquired receptive skills of *hika* thanks to *Dragon Ball*, and some even claim that they would be able to use it, although they do not tend to. Becoming familiar with the informal form of address, otherwise non-existent for many Basque speakers, has been translated by many as some sort of sympathy towards *hika*, as we have also indicated in the first research question.

Here we don't usually speak in *hika*... [*Dragon Ball*] provided a whole generation with the opportunity to know it, but we don't use it. (P_4683, 35-39)

Hika was bizarre for us, but we did like it when we heard it in cartoons. Moreover, it helped at least me understand it and place it in my mind. (P_1886, 40-44)

Dragon Ball seems to have exerted diverse influences: thousands of young fans perceived Basque as natural, fun and familiar on account of the series they watched every evening on ETB1. The acquisition and subsequent utilisation of words and expressions can also be attributed to *Dragon Ball*. Many of the participants wrote some word or sentence in Basque that they still remembered from the series. The fact that many characters spoke in *hika* is pinpointed by many participants as a positive feature, and a lot of them admit that they learnt *hika* forms by watching *Dragon Ball*. Some of them even employed *hika* forms but that did not bring about an actual use of the language in everyday life among those who did not use it beforehand.

4. DISCUSSION

The impact of the Basque adaptation of *Dragon Ball* in the 90s is out of question. The label *Dragon Ball generation* has been widely used and several participants mentioned it in the last open item of the questionnaire. Many have suggested that *Dragon Ball* had a positive effect on language attitudes and use, but no research had been carried out to shed light on this alleged influence. This study is an attempt to provide this phenomenon with empirical data.

It is not by chance that as many as 5,966 people from all over the Basque Country completed our online questionnaire, which indicates both the sizeable impact of the anime series 30 years after it was launched, as well as giving credibility to the findings we present here. Even though the results can be biased due to the methodology we used, the strength of this study resides in the high number of answers we received.

The high number of participants could be a double-edged sword: The *Dragon Ball* phenomenon could make many respondents overrate the influence of the series on their language attitudes and use, and their positive attitude towards and nice memories of *Dragon Ball* may result in a lack of objectivity. It is especially the case of most participants who reported that *Dragon Ball* was a referential programme for them.

Many researchers have warned that it is extremely difficult to analyse the cause-effect link between media consumption and language change (Androutsopoulos, 2014a; Tagliamonte, 2014), and the same has been argued regarding sociolinguistic change in minority language contexts (Cormack, 2007). Far from opposing this view, our study ratifies it. Such analyses run the risk of isolating TV consumption from many other crucial factors that could influence language use, so any cause-effect relationship must be dealt with very carefully.

Some have claimed that exposure is not enough and engagement is a *sine qua non* condition to make an impact on language (Androutsopoulos, 2014b; Gunter, 2000; Stuart-Smith, 2011), and engagement did take place in the case of *Dragon Ball* in the Basque Country. Children and teenagers were addicted to the anime series and the impact of a favourite TV programme regarding language use should not be underestimated (Coupland, 2007). Studies based on a single programme point in that direction (Stuart-Smith *et al.*, 2013; Trudgill, 1986). In this case we clearly focus on a single programme, and the results reveal that highly-engaged viewers can be influenced by a programme of which they are really fond.

This study took place in the Basque Country, where Basque is the minority language. Moriarty (2014) in Ireland found out that thanks to Irish-speaking channel TG4, young people perceived Irish as cooler and thought the channel contributed to more positive attitudes towards the minority language. The author also explored the effects of a single programme in Irish, and it seemed to play an important role in viewers' attitudes. Basque may not have such an "outdated image", but *Dragon Ball* also appears to have helped Basque to be regarded as a language with which to have fun outside school.

It is impossible to confirm that even a single participant started to use Basque on their everyday life because of *Dragon Ball*, but there is ample evidence of language benefits at different levels. As we have seen in the introduction, sociolinguistic change can take place in several areas. Regarding this study, vocabulary and expressions are the aspect that most participants mention, which goes in line with previous studies (Androutsopoulos, 2014a; Barambones *et al.*, 2012; Cormack, 2007; Lytra, 2006; O'Connell, 2003; Stuart-Smith, 2011). To what extent they actually use these terms, and whether or not they integrated them in their productive repertoire remains to be examined. Nonetheless, the narrative answers make clear that they still remember a great deal of them.

We specifically asked participants about *hika*, the lesser used informal form of address. Very few seem to have started using it directly after watching the Japanese series, except for a few expressions while mimicking *Dragon Ball* characters. Nevertheless, considering that *hika* is not commonly heard among most Basque speakers, *Dragon Ball* was a massive input for thousands of kids who would not have had any contact with it otherwise, as some of them make clear. This is a typical example of the different linguistic registers TV can offer to viewers (Barambones, 2012; Barambones *et al.*, 2012).

In this research we tried to explore media effect on both language use and attitudes. As for both Basque in general and *hika* in particular, the impact *Dragon Ball* had on its viewers seems to be more substantial in terms of attitudes than of use. However, as Cormack (2013: 262) puts it, "immediate language use may change due to media use, or longer-term language use. Attitudes to the language may change (which of course would be expected to have longer-term consequences)". Then, a possible effect on language attitudes in the context of a minority language should not be underrated. The feeling of becoming more familiar to Basque (and to *hika*) has been a constant in the comments participants wrote in the questionnaire.

In De Ridder and O'Connell's (2018: 402) words, "[a]udiovisual media, therefore, is a field where translation and sociolinguistics scholarship can make an important contribution by examining cause and effect and alerting both the industry and audiences to their findings." However, we should be more than careful if we want to conclude that a direct cause-effect relationship exists between media consumption and language attitudes and use, since we cannot isolate a single factor from the rest. More research is needed to better understand the effect of media on minority languages, and it might be now more difficult than ever, considering three important and probably intertwined elements: a huge diversity of TV channels, a low audience of Basque-speaking channels, and above all, the Internet. In relation to this, these days it seems inconceivable that there will be another programme with the same massive long-term influence that a programme such as *Dragon Ball* has had.

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