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## **9 Language policy in business and industry: Between local and global developments**

Globalisation reaches to all corners of the world, although not to the same degree everywhere. The daily lives of people get affected in the products they can buy (consumer goods from abroad), the way they dress (clothes produced far away), the food they eat (exotic food from other countries), the culture they consume (eg. Hollywood movies), the news they watch and even the way they speak. One of the consequences of globalisation is that many people are found to adopt more urban lifestyles including those living in rural areas. As Castells (1996) pointed out, in our “networked world” we experience interconnectedness with people from around the globe.

In the Basque Country in Spain, over the past 40 years a strong policy has been developed to support and strengthen the use of the minority language, Basque, in all domains of society, including private business and industry. The policy to promote the minority language has led to several initiatives to encourage the use of the minority language in companies. During about the same period of time, the global language English has gradually obtained a more prominent position in society.

In a region like the Basque Country in Spain, globalisation is clearly noticeable. A large variety of international products are available to consumers, because the region is well-connected by road, by rail and by sea to Europe and other countries around the globe. Furthermore, the improvement in technology has an important influence on the daily lives of people, such as their language habits, which is of special relevance in an area where a local language has been spoken since “time immemorial”. Over the centuries, through foreign contacts the Basque language has been influenced by several languages, such as French, Latin and Spanish. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, an important shift took place. Many indigenous Basque people switched from speaking Basque to Spanish, and fewer people transmitted the language to the next generation. During the period of the Franco dictatorship (1939-1975), the Basque language was suppressed and this further accelerated language shift toward Spanish. Only in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a relatively strong language policy was implemented to revitalise Basque; the main aim is to extend the use of Basque to all domains of society. Notwithstanding these revitalisation efforts, Spanish has remained the dominant language in the Basque society, and due to global developments English has gradually obtained a larger presence, although compared to some Northern European countries its presence is still modest.

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This chapter looks at the efforts of Basque language planning and policy, in particular in the private sector, against the background of globalisation. On the one hand, the Basque regional government has developed an important programme of measures to revitalise the use of the Basque language, not only in the fields of education, culture and media (Gorter, Zenotz, Etxague & Cenoz, 2014), but also for private companies. On the other hand, the same government has also developed plans for internationalisation of companies; efforts which recently were intensified after the beginning of the economic crisis. The governmental policy and planning to promote the local language Basque go in parallel with campaigns to make Basque companies operate on a global market, where the use of English is often seen as obligatory. The chapter discusses how the local companies mediate between the local and global demands, and how this has affected the region.

## 9.1 Globalisation in the region

According to Wallerstein (1974), the process of globalisation is similar to the “world system”; the world became more connected through trade, transport, and technology. However, Wallerstein (1974) also states that it is not a recent phenomenon, but in fact, these developments originated centuries ago and only recently are being accelerated. In the field of globalisation studies, some authors point to important factors, such as the rise of free trade between countries (Irwin, 2015), the introduction of standardised 40-foot containers which make quick trans-shipment of goods possible (Levinson, 2006), or the invention of computer chips which helped create the internet (Mazurek, 1999), all of which are captured in the famous saying “the internet changes everything” (Businessweek, 1995). In those theories, globalisation is explained by economic or technological factors, but there is also a cultural side related to consciousness and values. Robertson (1992: 8) emphasises the cultural dimension when he refers to globalisation as “the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole.” Languages and linguistic diversity are included in such a cultural dimension of globalisation.

Robertson (1992) is also among the first to use the concept of ‘*glocalization*’; he likens it to a process in which the relationships between the global orientations and the preservation of local values come together. This hybrid concept draws attention to the fact that globalisation is interpreted and taken up differently depending on the starting point and history of different local groups. Wellman (2002) metaphorically refers to the opening up of the local as if it was a set of closed little boxes, and he mentions how people are now moving more and more between separated social networks. This is because the workplace of people is no longer the same as their neighborhood or the town where they live. Instead, they commute via the highway and do not know what is located in between. Wellman (2002) highlights the movement of people as another important characteristic of globalisation. Large streams of (labor-)

migrants and refugees have led to millions of people settling in other places away from where their ancestors were born and lived. Inevitably, these migrants will take the languages they speak as a child to the host countries, and along the way many will learn the languages of those new countries. Thus, globalisation is not only about economic, technological or general cultural issues, but also linguistic spread and diversity, which has an effect on language policy and planning.

During the last few decades, globalisation has also given rise to the global spread of English in the domains of trade, technology and mass-culture. Across the globe, English has become the language most often learned in the school system of almost any country. It has become hugely attractive for many people since they believe that learning the language will bring economic, social and political advantages. The new global language has been given a high prestige and people associate English with being modern, cosmopolitan, chic, and “current”. The British Council and commercial enterprises actively promote the learning of English and make huge profits on its testing. Other languages, such as French, Mandarin and Spanish are also spoken by hundreds of millions of people, and the learning of those major languages is actively promoted by institutions, such as Alliance Française, Confucius Institutes and Instituto Cervantes that are funded by their state governments.

Due to globalisation, mainly through its spread in the mass media, people around the globe learn new names of places, persons, products, services and ideas all at the time. Some of the terms have become household words in a short period of time (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Wikipedia), others are short-lived in collective memory because of a war or a disaster (e.g. *Eyjafjallajökull*, the Icelandic volcano erupted in 2010). Brand names come and go; some become verbs while others are forgotten (e.g. Polaroid, Fax) often because of outdated technology, merger, bankruptcy or a change of name to sound more modern. Thus, globalisation has also led to quite a shared amount of vocabulary among a large portion of citizens across the globe, which besides commercial names and news events, also includes names of sports players and clubs, movie stars, idols in popular music, government leaders and politicians and others. However, globalisation does not reach to all people due to personal choice or simply a lack of access to modern technology. In a similar vein, the way globalisation has an effect on bilingual speakers of regional languages like Basque is different from how globalisation affects the monolingual speakers of larger state languages, such as French or Spanish.

In the context of this chapter, it is important to consider the effect of globalisation on language policies whereby the aim is to preserve, to protect and to promote minority languages such as Basque. Stimulus measures are taken to teach the language in schools and to encourage its use among its speakers, and this happens at different levels of society – the government, schools and other institutions. In this chapter, the focus is on language policies in private companies in the commercial sector.

## 9.2 A framework for language policy and planning

The field of Language Policy and Planning (LPP) has had an important development. Kaplan and Baldauf eloquently express the core of the field as “in the simplest sense, language planning is an attempt by someone to modify the linguistic behaviour of some community for some reason” (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997: 3). They further define language planning as involving “deliberate, although not always overt, future-oriented change in systems of language code and/or speaking in a social context, [... mostly] undertaken by government” (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997: 3). They recognise that language planning also occurs in other societal contexts and at other levels than the state government. Similarly, Spolsky (2004) refers to language policy as a determined and explicit policy change, a set of managed and planned interventions supported and enforced by law and implemented by a government agency. However, Spolsky (2009) prefers to use the term ‘language management’ instead to emphasise the range of levels at which language policy and management can take place, for example inside a family, a church or an organisation. Spolsky (2009) anchors his language management framework on three components: language practices, beliefs about language and efforts to modify practices. In a nutshell, Spolsky (2004) believes that the ideologies about the language, the ecology that surrounds that language and the actions taken to manage or manipulate language behavior are the foundation of language policy.

Often a basic distinction is made between ‘status planning’ (the use of language in society), and ‘corpus planning’ (the language system itself). In his study of the standardisation of Norwegian in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century (with its two varieties of Nynorsk and Bokmal), Haugen (1966; 1987) uses that distinction to design and develop his cyclical framework of language policy over time. He distinguishes four stages of policy: codification, elaboration, implementation, and evaluation. However, Cooper (1989) advocates a third dimension of language planning – ‘acquisition planning’, which refers to language teaching but includes a wider range of learning activities (Cooper, 1989: 157-163). This third dimension is also referred to as ‘language-in-education planning’. Based on these studies and others, Kaplan and Baldauf (2003) develop a revised and expanded framework of language planning goals; they use these three dimensions of status, corpus and language-in-education planning, and add ‘prestige planning’ as a fourth dimension. Prestige planning is about the image of the language, “so that the full capabilities of the language are actually used in important or prestigious situations” (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003: 222).

Baldauf (2006) emphasises that language policy and planning has to be extended from the dominant macro perspective to focus more on micro language planning. This includes businesses, education, and other organisations which have strong influence at the local level. He also mentions the importance of globalisation and

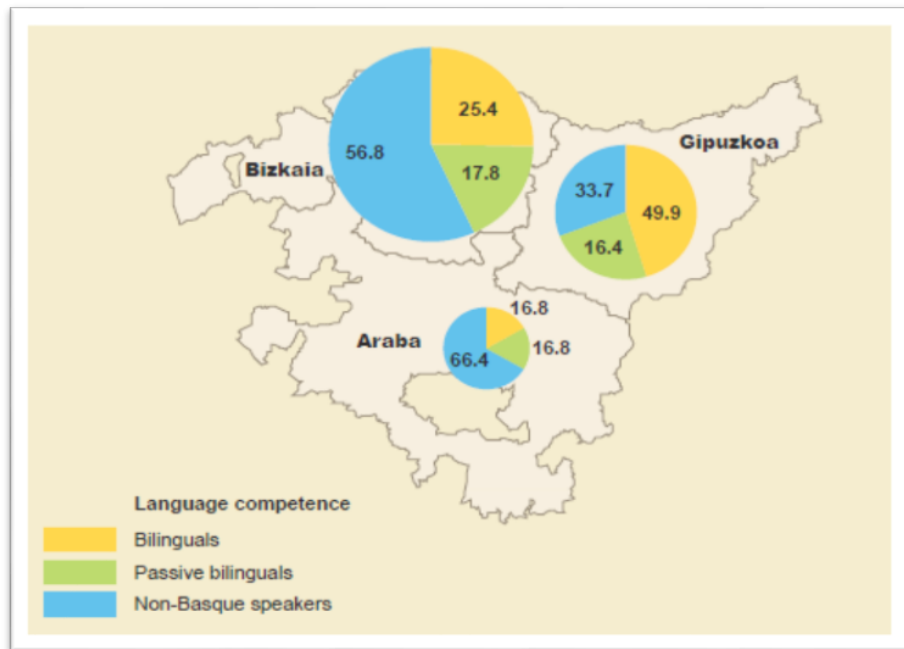
power and provides several examples of the relevance of micro language planning, among others for sales and services and for manufacturing. He concludes that “micro language planning seems to be a useful concept for solving language problems in a range of areas including business” (Baldauf, 2006: 166). The following section discusses the main outlines of the sociolinguistic and economic context of Basque businesses.

### 9.3 Sociolinguistic and economic context

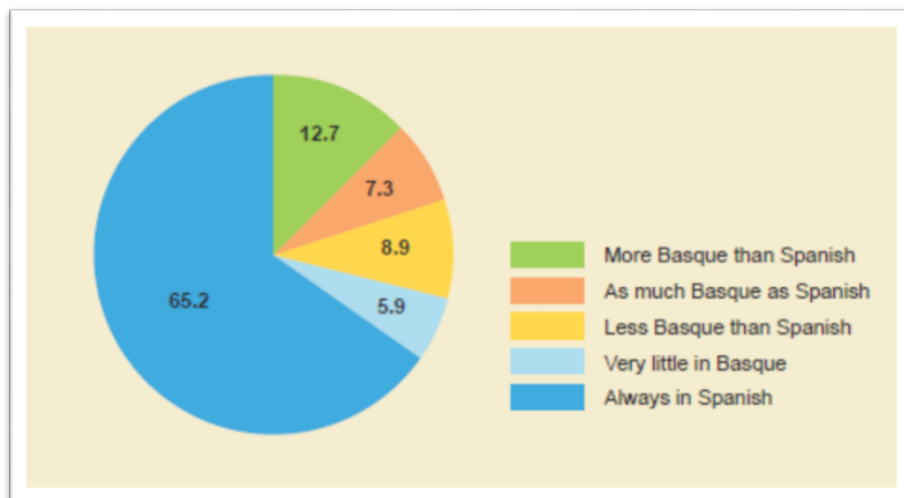
The Basque Country is located on the state border between France and Spain, where it extends from the Western Pyrenees along the coast of the Gulf of Biscay. It has a total population close to 3 million people. The area is historically divided into seven provinces. Today the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) consists of the provinces of Araba, Bizkaia, and Gipuzkoa and has 2.1 million inhabitants. The neighbouring autonomous province of Navarre has 642 000 inhabitants. The Northern Basque Country, or Iparralde, is part of the French ‘Département des Pyrénées Atlantiques’ and has 260 000 inhabitants. Historically, it consists of the three provinces Lapurdi (Labourd), Nafarroa Behera (Lower-Navarre) and Zuberoa (Soule). In this chapter, the focus is on the Basque Autonomous Community and following the usage of the Basque Government, we will refer to it as Basque Country.

The sociolinguistic context can be summarised based on the extensive sociolinguistic surveys carried out since 1991 with five-year intervals (Vice-Ministry for Language Policy, 2013). We will briefly discuss the geographic distribution, the language competence per area, the use of Basque and the attitudes towards the promotion of Basque. According to the 2011 survey-data, 32% of the population of the Basque Country is bilingual, which means they can speak Basque and Spanish, another 17% understands Basque but can only speak Spanish and 51% can only speak Spanish and has no Basque knowledge (Vice-Ministry for Language Policy, 2013, p. 67). One important characteristic of the Basque language is its uneven geographic distribution. Some areas have less than 20% Basque speakers, other areas have between 20 and 50% or between 50 and 80%, but only in a few territories, such as in Gipuzkoa, there are over 80% of Basque speakers.

Figure 9.1 shows that there are clear differences in language competence between the three provinces, ranging from 49.9% bilingual Basque-Spanish speakers in Gipuzkoa, to 25.4% in Bizkaia and only 16.8% in Araba. The survey also presented results for language use (see Figure 9.2).



**Fig. 9.1:** Language competence in the provinces Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa and Araba (Basque Country) (in percentages; aged 16 years and over). (Source: Vice-Ministry for Language Policy, 2013: 69). NB: the size of each circle represents the size of the population of each province.



**Fig. 9.2:** Language use in the Basque Country (in percentages; aged 16 years and over). (Source: Vice-Ministry for Language Policy, 2013: 98).

Figure 9.2 shows that 28.9% of the people use Basque to a considerable extent, of those, 12.7% use more Basque than Spanish, 7.3% use Basque as much as Spanish and 8.9% use some Basque but more often Spanish. A large majority (65.2%) always use Spanish and 5.9% almost always use Spanish (Vice-Ministry for Language Policy, 2013: 98). Over the last 20 years, the use of Basque has increased gradually. The percentage of people who only use Spanish or a little Basque has gone down from 78% in 1991, to 71% in 2011. The survey results further indicates that the use of Basque has increased most in formal service situations (such as government services and health care) and with colleagues at work. In terms of language attitudes, the survey found that a majority of 62% view the promotion of the use of Basque favourably, 26% are neutral and 12% are against. The number in favour of the language policy to promote Basque has increased by 7% over the last 20 years.

An interesting observation can be made from the basic economic data about the Basque Country. Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) with less than 250 workers make up over 99% of all companies (out of about 165,500 companies, 2011 data) and those SMEs employ two-thirds of the total workforce (EPIC, 2013). Since the start of the crisis in 2008, the Basque economy has suffered a downward trend, and the number of companies has decreased. The industrial sector is the most important sector for foreign export; about half of all exports go to five countries (France, Germany, Italy, the United States of America and the United Kingdom), while the other half goes to a whole range of other countries. Over the last few years, exports of Basque companies have increased substantially but mainly due to large companies that do much more in terms of internationalisation and innovation than the SMEs (Confebask, 2014). This circumstance has an influence on the possibilities for the development of micro language planning inside companies. Often, in large-scale companies there is more capacity to develop a language policy than in SMEs, especially in small companies with fewer than 50 workers. At the level of the regional government, the *Basque Agency for Business Development* (SPRI) aims to internationalise local companies besides attracting foreign investors to the Basque Country. However, this government agency has placed little attention in the development of language planning and policy as a factor in internationalisation although this is compensated with the government setting up a separate agency that focuses on the development of Basque language policy. In the next section a short overview of the developments of language policy and planning will be given.

## 9.4 Language policy and planning for Basque in general

Recent historical events are important in understanding the ways in which language planning and policy for Basque has developed over a period of about 40 years. After the end of the Franco dictatorship in 1975, the first legal recognition of Basque came into the Spanish constitution of 1978. The Basque language was declared a co-

official language in the territory of the Basque Autonomous Community alongside with Spanish. This gave an important boost to the status planning of Basque. Corpus planning had been going on for some time since the standardisation of the Basque language in the 1960s. Further elaboration of terminology, grammars, specialised dictionaries, etc. was continued from the 1980s onwards as well. In the Autonomous Region of Navarre, there was a similar legal recognition, but it was restricted to the Basque-speaking areas in the north. In the northern part of the Basque Country in France, on the other side of the state border, there is no or minimal legal recognition, which means that Basque has much less formal status there. This chapter focuses on language policy and planning in the Basque Autonomous Community (as previously mentioned, we refer to it as Basque Country throughout this chapter).

The legal status of Basque was further enhanced by the Basque Country's Statute of Autonomy (1979) and the Basic Law on the Normalization of Basque Language Use (1982). A central notion of these texts is "normalisation", a concept which in Spanish refers to a general process through which the minority language will become a normal language of daily communication for the citizens. More specific guidelines were contained in the *General Plan for the Promotion of the Use of Basque* (EBPN, 1999). The basic aim of the plan is formulated as "to promote language policy measures necessary to ensure the possibility of living in Basque for those who so desire" (EBPN, 1999, p. 53). Through this policy a situation has to be created in which the use of Basque is taken for granted and its social status is fully accepted. It implies the public use of Basque on equal footing with Spanish. This can be considered as the core of the policy of 'normalization'.

In the 1980s, the Basque language was the first language of a relatively small proportion of the population (24.1% according to the first sociolinguistic survey in 1991) (Vice-Ministry for Language Policy, 2013: 249). To improve the situation, priority was given to the teaching of the Basque language in schools. The emphasis was thus on language-in-education planning. The idea was to start learning Basque as early as possible and to introduce the language in all stages of education, including the university and adult courses. Three basic models were developed in order to create a choice for parents. In the first choice, they can send their children to the so-called D-model where all teaching takes place through the medium of Basque, except where Spanish is taught as a subject for a limited number of hours per week. Originally the D-model was intended for pupils with Basque as their home language, but over time it became also popular among Spanish-speaking parents. The second choice is the B-model where Basque and Spanish are taught for about 50% of the time and both languages are also taught as a subject. As for the third choice, there is the A-model, which is more or less the reverse of the D-model because the basic teaching language is Spanish and Basque is only taught as a subject for some hours. In many cases, one school can offer the parents the choice between two models or sometimes even three. At the beginning there were serious shortages of materials for the teaching of Basque and other subjects through the medium of Basque, so the government agency gave



strong support to the development of learning materials. At the same time priority was given to the training of teachers who can teach through the medium of Basque. In this way, schools were facilitated to create a stream for a D-model in their school.

Over time, these policy measures have led to some impressive changes in the education system. In 1982 only about 5% of all teachers were able to teach through the medium of Basque but by 2012 the figure has gone up to over 80%. The demand for education through the medium of Basque (D-model) has increased significantly. In addition, the percentage of new registrations for the D-model Kindergarten has gone up from 7% in the school year 1982-1983 to 77% in the school year 2014-2015. Usually once a child is registered in a model, s/he will remain there throughout his or her school career. Nonetheless, the increase in the participation in the D-model has been gradual, and therefore the number of students enrolled in secondary schools where Basque is the medium of instruction is still lower. In the school year 2014-2015, 60% of the upper-secondary students are enrolled in the D-model.

As a consequence of the language-in-education policy, the number of people that are able to speak Basque has increased substantially over the years. In 1991, about 24.1% of the population was able to speak Basque, but 20 years later, according to the survey of 2011, the number had increased to 32% (Vice-Ministry for Language Policy, 2013: 70).

This shows that there has been a gradual increase among the population as a whole but a closer look at the category of 16-24 year olds shows a more impressive increase. In 1991, in the youngest age-bracket of the survey, about 25% could speak Basque, and this also included a small group who had already gone through the Basque medium education in the years before. By 2011, the percentage for this group had gone up to 59.7% (Vice-Ministry for Language Policy, 2013: 73).

However, one of the main challenges for the revitalisation (or normalisation) of Basque is to put the acquisition of language skills into actual use. Although the sociolinguistic surveys indicate that the knowledge of Basque has increased, the daily use of the language is still lagging behind. The usage figures for the youngest generation are somewhat more favourable because they are more proficient in the language, but a substantial group of young people only uses Basque from time to time and less often than Spanish. As there are important differences in the geographic distribution over the territory, the percentages for those people who use Basque at least as often as Spanish in the province of Gipuzkoa are much higher than in the province of Araba.

Over the years, more and more parents from Spanish-speaking homes have chosen Basque as a medium of education. There are several reasons to explain this phenomenon. An important reason is that Basque as a medium of instruction has produced academically successful students. Pupils not only achieve high levels of proficiency in Basque and Spanish, but also in mathematics, English, and other subjects. The idea that learning more languages is an advantage has caught on. There is a strong awareness that Basque is an endangered language and the parents want to contribute to saving the language. The choice for the D-model can also be linked to a strong sense of Basque identity which is reflected in relatively high percentages of

votes for nationalistic political parties (over half of the electorate). Another reason is the absence of a counter-reaction against Basque as a medium of instruction because there was and still is a choice for those parents who do not want it for their children. Other developments in the wider society have further contributed to the reinforcement of Basque in education. More support and provisions are made for Basque-language media, such as the radio and television programmes, but also music, literature, theatre, folklore and, nowadays, the Internet, social media and other digital resources even though the offer of Spanish media content is still much larger.

Another important reason for the increase in popularity of the Basque language is its socio-economic advantage. In particular, in the labor market, such as the public administration sector, proficiency in Basque has increasingly become a job requirement. Gradually such requirements for certain proficiency levels of Basque have extended to include almost all civil servants. In recent developments, such requirements have been adopted by many companies in the private sector that require (or prefer) specific levels of knowledge of Basque of their staff, particularly in jobs where staff members are in contact with the public, such as financial services (banks, insurances), tourism, hospitality industry, shops, and other commercial establishments. Thus, the increase in socio-economic demand implies an important incentive for parents to send their children to Basque medium education.

The development of language planning and policy aimed at the private sector is of special relevance for this chapter, and the most important policy programme for this sector is a programme called '*Lan-Hitz*' (which means language at work); this programme will be described in the next section.

## 9.5 Language policy and planning for Basque companies

As discussed previously, language policy and planning is most often thought of as being developed by the government with the aim to influence the public sector. In the Basque Country, over the years the different levels of government – regional, provincial and municipal – have developed policy plans that primarily aim at their own institutions and related organisations. At the same time, they have developed initiatives to support the use of Basque specifically for the private sector. One example is a grant scheme by the city of Donostia-San Sebastián that gives subsidies for using Basque in public signage. The local government provides a subsidy of up to 50% to shop-owners for the costs of new signs when those are in Basque only and 30% when they are bilingual in Basque and Spanish (with limitations of the maximum amounts) (Aiestaran, Cenoz & Gorter, 2010; Gorter, Aiestaran & Cenoz, 2012). Similar programmes also exist in other municipalities.

An important policy measure is the programme called *Lan-Hitz* (language at work) that was set up in 1997. This programme can be seen as an example of micro language planning for companies (Baldauf, 2006). The goal is to increase the presence

and the use of Basque in the domain of the private sector. The *Lan-Hitz* programme is directly linked to the *General Plan for the Promotion of the Use of Basque* (EBPN, 1999) already mentioned above. The General Plan applies to language policy and planning for the whole of society whereas the *Lan-Hitz* programme aims at language use in the world of work in a wide sense, but in particular in private companies. Every year the regional government makes grants available for entities in the private sector to develop their own language policy plans. The government prescribes a standardised tool called 'EME' to develop tailor made language plans. The tool is designed to assist companies in a systematic design, implementation and evaluation of their plans for the use of Basque. As a company cannot change its language use in all areas of work all at once, the planning tool subdivides all areas of work into a large number of small steps. The tool is an interesting example of micro language planning that could also be used in other situations and therefore a short overview will be given.

The EME planning tool covers three key areas: (1) the corporate image and communication, (2) external relations, and (3) internal relations. For each area, the tool provides a detailed diagnosis of the contents of communications. As a whole, it constitutes a framework with 143 different sections for which language use is established. For example, in the key area *Corporate Image and Communication*, the heading 'reception' is divided into three sub-headings: 'language of reception', 'visits' and 'security'. The first of those, 'language of reception' is further subdivided into four smaller sections: (1) personal or telephone attention: salutation and general information, (2) automatic reception, answering machine, automatic cashiers, (3) public address (PA) system, and (4) written record of visitors. For each of the smaller sections, a company is asked to describe how they plan to use Basque (next to Spanish which they already use in almost all cases). The second example concerns the key area of *Internal Relations*, where one of its five subheadings is called 'horizontal and vertical communication'. This subheading is then further divided into four smaller sections with one titled 'work meetings, groups and committees' where a distinction is made (1) short texts, such as announcements and presentation materials, (2) oral presentations and (3) long texts, such as reports. Basically, the EME-tool will be used by companies to determine precisely where they want to increase the use of Basque in their company structures. The outcome of the diagnosis is an overall language plan for Basque that includes a detailed timetable for implementation.

Through the application of the step-by-step EME-tool, the use of Basque in the company can be increased alongside with Spanish. Usually Basque is dealt with as an issue on its own and even with increased internationalisation, English or other languages are often not included in the language plan. Usually, a company appoints a staff member as its Basque language coordinator, and creates a special working group to support the planning work. The first step is to make an inventory of language competences of the staff of the company, which is followed by an appraisal of the company using the EME-tool. It establishes the basis for a multi-annual plan for Basque and an annual implementation plan. These plans can be supported by grants from the

regional government, and the provincial governments of Araba, Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa. Moreover, *Elhuyar*, a private foundation whose main aim is “to consolidate the Basque language in science, technology and society” and who is known for developing Basque language materials, such as dictionaries and teaching materials, has developed a tool called “*neurtzeko*” (see <http://neurtzeko.net/>) to make it possible to follow the presence and use of Basque in companies based on the EME framework.

In order to illustrate how the planning for Basque in a company works, this section discusses the case of the *Elay Group*, which is mainly based upon the study of the *Soziolinguistika Klusterra* (2008)<sup>42</sup> and a recent Language Communication Audit (van der Worp, 2015). The *Elay Group* is a high technological industrial company that manufactures metallic parts using fine blanking technology, a special type of metal stamping or precision cutting to produce, for example, the metal parts of safety belts or brake plates. The company has about 400 employees and an annual turnover of 55 million euros (see [www.elay.com](http://www.elay.com)). The main premises are located in the town of Antzuola, in the heartland of the Basque Country. In the early 1980s the teaching of Basque in towns’ schools began while most of the adults used Basque at home, among friends and in the street. Conversely, inside the factory, the employees continued to use Spanish. Some workers of *Elay* had the idea that they could also use Basque as a working language. After contacting the regional government and the *Elhuyar* foundation they developed a first plan for Basque. Gradually some measures were introduced, those included in 1982 bilingual signage and some bilingual internal documents, and in 1987 reimbursement for Basque language courses for workers (the same year the first two workers took a course). In 1992 the company started a pilot-project to extend its work through Basque, even though there was little prior experience of how to introduce changes in language habits in a company. It also actively participated in the application of the *Lan-Hitz* programme.

An important challenge was to ensure that the workers are literate in Basque so as to prevent language loss since that generation of adults was only taught in Spanish. During the next years, intentional ‘communication circles’ were set up where Basque was used among colleagues, and these turned out to be successful in creating new daily language use habits. However, Basque was not used in the external relations of the company due to the delicate sociolinguistic situation in the business world in the Basque Country in the 1990s. After a few years, the communicative circles disappeared and a Basque language commission was given the task of systematically implementing and evaluating the use of the language, and workers began to use the language spontaneously and could progress on their own. Since then the Basque language became an institutionalised part of management as any other kind of business issue.

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<sup>42</sup> The *Soziolinguistika Klusterra*, a cluster of several non-profit organisations, published a number of case studies on the implementation of Basque language plans between 2007 and 2014 (see [www.soziolinguistika.eus/kasuak](http://www.soziolinguistika.eus/kasuak); texts are in Basque and Spanish, some in French).

However, the documents and procedures that described the use of Basque were until 2008 only written in Spanish while internal work orders were bilingual. Gradually the company started to have internal documents in Basque only. In 1992 about 65% of the workforce of *Elay* could speak Basque and nothing was written in Basque. In 2008, 16 years later, 85% could speak and 83% could write Basque; 72% of all written texts were in Basque (Soziolinguistika Klusterra, 2008: 7). By 2015 the whole workforce, except for six people, speaks Basque very well. Today all internal documents are in Basque, but invoices are also in English and Spanish.

In external relations, the difficulties the company encountered in the use of Basque were gradually overcome. The Chamber of Commerce and their auditing company had begun to translate their documents in Basque, but there were quite a few struggles with the social security administration, the labor office and even branches of the Basque Government. Many times the employees of the companies felt isolated, but due to their persistence they had become a guiding example in the Basque Country of how to implement a policy for the use of the minority language. The *Elay Group* operates on a global scale; it has factories in Mexico and China, a sales-office in Germany and 80% of its clients are from abroad. Thus, most of the external relations are conducted in Spanish and English. Despite its global emphasis, the company's philosophy is to maintain its Basque identity, and in order to achieve this the use of Basque is essential. This is reflected in efforts to introduce some Basque in their offices abroad, where the directors of the plants in Mexico and in China are both Basque speakers (van der Worp, 2015), and even a Chinese worker is learning Basque. English is mostly used in situations abroad, for example also with clients in France or Germany, although it may not be their most preferred language. In a nutshell, the company shows a strong awareness of the importance of languages; its main principle is to promote the use of different languages depending on the circumstances. It is one of the first companies that is proactive in the development of language plans for multilingualism, which are discussed in the next section.

From the numbers of annual grants in the *Lan-Hitz* programme (for example, more than 600 in 2014) it is evident that thousands of companies have taken part over the years. However, the number of very small enterprises is huge compared to large companies (almost 155.000 of the total of 165.000 enterprises in the Basque Country have less than 10 workers, see Confebask, 2014), and there are fewer possibilities and fewer facilities for implementing a language plan for Basque in these very small enterprises. Perhaps there is also less need because most issues can be resolved in an informal way and within the coincidental composition of the small work-team. Moreover, as shown in the example of the *Elay Group*, implementing a language plan on a micro scale is a slow process and hence planning for Basque in the private sector still has a long way to go. Overall, an impressive amount of work has been done to promote Basque in the private sector and this is much more than what has been achieved for other European minority languages perhaps with the exception of Catalan and Welsh for which similar policy efforts have been undertaken.

## 9.6 Policy and planning for multilingualism for Basque companies

As we have discussed previously, increasing the internationalisation of local companies is an important aim of the Basque government; their economic policy of encouraging exports to other countries brings with it the use of other languages. One would thus expect that a need for multilingual language policy was felt. However, the awareness in companies seems low and usually does not extend beyond the need for better skills in English among the staff (van der Worp, Gorter & Cenoz, 2016). An exception is the already mentioned *Elhuyar* foundation that some years ago had made a step from planning for the use of Basque and managing bilingualism to adopting a more multilingual approach. One of the main reasons given was “to adapt to the changes brought by globalisation”. As stated by *Elhuyar*, “our clients work at global level and have to handle different languages. The bilingual context in which companies worked before has now become a multilingual context” (Soziolinguistika Klusterra, 2014: 30). In response, it created an online platform called “Hizkuna”, which is intended for “language management in multilingual environments”. The platform consists of a number of resources such as machine translation, voice synthesis, and digital dictionaries that are meant to support work in an international environment (see <http://hizkuna.elhuyar.eus>). In this case ‘language management’ seems to have a more restricted meaning and refers to an applied and technical approach to solving language problems.

One company that felt an obvious need to develop a multilingual policy in recent years was *the Tecnalia Corporation*, an organisation working in the sphere of research, development and innovation (RDI). The case of *Tecnalia* clearly illustrates how local and global demands interact in the development of language policy and planning for multilingualism. The following summary is mainly based upon the study of the Soziolinguistika Klusterra (2014).

*Tecnalia* is the result of a merger of eight technology centers in 2010 (see [www.tecnalia.com/en/](http://www.tecnalia.com/en/)). Today, it has spread over 20 locations with its head quarter in Donostia-San Sebastián, another eleven locations in the Basque Country, four in Spain and four more in France, Italy, Mexico and Serbia. *Tecnalia* has a multilingual workforce of over 1.400 staff-members from 29 nationalities. It is one of the important private research centers in Spain and Europe. In 2011 the newly merged organisation started to develop a language policy plan that took into account its Basque roots, its international research context and its multilingual workforce. The first step of the specially established *Linguistic Diversity Group* was to take the EME-tool in order to design a language plan, not only for Basque but also for Spanish and English because these three were the most common used languages. The new policy distinguished between (1) obligatory use of all three languages (e.g. in newsletters, the website); (2) flexible use of two languages (e.g. Basque and Spanish with Basque authorities or English and French with French clients); and (3) open language use, where everyone can use the language(s) of their choice. After a few months it turned

out that managing this large organisations' linguistic diversity was more complex than initially thought. The implementation process was halted and a period of reflection initiated. This coincided with contacts with the Elhuyar foundation and cooperation began in early 2012. Together they started to analyse different internal communication processes and the most urgent areas to work on such as marketing and external communication were identified. *Tecnalía* now uses all three languages on its website and in important documents of external communication such as its annual report. Care has been taken to ensure that all people working in the reception at the different locations can respond in Basque, Spanish and English. For internal communication many templates are available; the company newsletter is trilingual, and increasingly standard emails are also written in three languages. Other initiatives, such as 'language lunches' to create opportunities for staff to practice language skills, were less successful. *Tecnalía* aims to disseminate an understanding of how to deal with different languages among its employees, partners and clients. There are some stated principles, but no strict rules because the idea is to work in a flexible way. At the same time, the company wants to break with the past by creating a multilingual environment in all centers. However, a lot of work remains to be done in the field of language management.

More recently, *Elhuyar* has developed a new diagnosis tool specifically for planning multilingualism in companies and other organisations that operate internationally. The tool is used by *Elhuyar* while it participates in a European project called EPIC (which stands for '*Enhancing and Promoting International Business Communication*', see <http://epicforyou.eu/en/>). The European EPIC-project runs as a pilot in four countries – Italy, Lithuania, Poland and Spain (Basque Country). The aim is to help Small and Medium- sized Enterprises (SMEs) to overcome language and cultural barriers in international trading. The project is funded by the European Commission (Lifelong Learning Programme) and it is based on outcomes of earlier research that found that SMEs have an annual turnover loss of up to 11% due to communication barriers (European Commission, 2006) and SMEs can gain up to 25% revenue by implementing a language management strategy (Hagen, 2011). In the EPIC project a common *Language Communication Audit* (LCA) has been designed. The first step in such an audit consists of a pre-audit questionnaire filled in by the company. This is followed by a personal visit of one or two auditors to review the company's communication channels, strategies, and possible language barriers. The auditor then provides a report with an analysis of the current linguistic situation and recommendations for improvement. The outcome is a tailor-made policy plan for multilingualism. The company can decide to implement the proposed changes or not, but the main idea is to help the company to create new possibilities for international trade and will thus raise its annual turnover. The *Elhuyar* foundation has widened its scope by applying the European based LCA to what is still a limited number of companies and organisations in the Basque Country. Even though the support for the use of Basque is still prioritised, the new approach includes a diagnosis of the use of

other languages, in particular English. In this way *Elhuyar* may evolve from a local to an international player in language management for companies.

## 9.7 Discussion and conclusion

This chapter highlights the development of the language policy and planning for the revitalisation of the Basque language with particular emphasis on the private sector. At the micro level a form of language planning has been reasonably successful to support the use of Basque in private companies through a standardised tool *EME* and being part of a special programme *Lan-Hitz* that aimed at the language of work. Over the four decades this minority language has gradually obtained a more prominent place in the day-to-day internal and external communications, and in the marketisation of many large and small businesses in the Basque Country. As shown in the case of the *Elay Group*, there is a need for persistent effort over a significant period in order to obtain positive results in the operation of the company through the medium of Basque.

However, the impact of globalisation has become more significant in the region and the need for the use of the global language English is felt by many companies. Therefore, the region responded by developing multilingual policies in the already bilingual Basque-Spanish context. As seen in the case of *Tecnalia*, the company took the effort to develop adequate plans and provide support to use the three languages – Basque, English and Spanish - in internal and external communication, and where there was a demand, other languages were also used.

Essentially, larger companies with more than 250 workers will be better able to implement multilingual plans for Basque, English, Spanish, and other languages because they have more capacity. As shown in the case of the *Elay Group* and confirmed by the interviews with the managers in internationally operating companies in our earlier study (van der Worp et al., 2016), the findings suggest that whenever a company starts to think about internationalization, the focus is on competency in English. The idea that ‘English is enough’ seems to be the prevailing attitude in dealing with overseas businesses even though in many internationalisation plans language is not given any priority. There is some awareness of the importance of cultural differences, for example, they often notice cultural differences with Latin American countries although they can mostly speak Spanish in their business relationships with those countries. However, they seem to underestimate the effect of using only English with their French, German, Chinese, or other trade partners. A Language Communication Audit as carried out in the EPIC-project suggests that internationally operating companies also need other languages besides English, but to convince the leadership of the companies to look beyond English will be a difficult task especially for SMEs. Due to their company size, they are more likely to have a hard time developing a multilingualism plan and hence they will need the support of the



Basque government and an organisation like *Elhuyar*. In conclusion, most companies in the Basque Country will have to navigate between the local needs of support for the minority language and the global demands of English and other languages for business communication abroad in this global age.

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