Intergenerational language change in a Basque town: Age, gender, and attitude correlates of variation in Low Vowel Assimilation

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Abstract

Regional Dialect Levelling is a common development in a number of languages whereby supra-local forms are diffused over regionally marked forms (Auer, 1998; Kerswill, 2002; 2003; Kerswill & Williams, 2002). Basque sociolinguists (Unamuno & Aurrekoetxea, 2013; Zuazo, 1998) have also observed levelling patterns in the language, arguably under the influence of the standard. According to Aurrekoetxea (2006, p. 147), one of the features that seems to be undergoing change towards supra-localisation is the cross-dialectally widespread Low Vowel Assimilation (LVA); however, this phenomenon has received little sociolinguistic attention. Therefore, this study aims to gauge the depth of variation of LVA in the Western Basque town of Lezama in order to determine whether claims of levelling can be substantiated. Through an apparent-time study of two generations of Lezamans, the results reported here do not fully support a levelling interpretation of the feature. Gender-specific patterns of use emerge that corroborate observations that "women deviate less than men from linguistic norms when the deviations are overtly proscribed, but more than men when the deviations are not proscribed" (Labov, 2001, p. 367). Furthermore, consistent with recent studies (Elordieta & Romera, in press; Urtzelai Vicente, 2018), attitudes towards the ingroup are established as a determinant of the language trends in Lezama.

Keywords: Basque, intergenerational change, levelling, Low Vowel Assimilation, language attitudes.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Preamble

In 2012 the Lezama town council commissioned local street artists to paint a graffiti on the left-side wall of the town hall that read *Euskeraz bizi gure dogu* 'We want to live in Basque' under the initiative *Euskaraz bizi nahi dut* 'I want to live in Basque', launched in 2010 and supported by the regional government. What in the early 2010s became an unstoppable social phenomenon sought to raise awareness of the dwindling use of Basque outside domestic and academic spheres, mainly through a popular song by the ska band *Esne Beltza*. Thanks to the song, "Euskaraz bizi nahi dut", Basque people were encouraged to understand that Basque, like any other language, was suitable enough for all sorts of social exchanges. The Lezama painting, however, displayed some differences from the well-known motto that had travelled across the Basque Country.

Firstly, changing the first person singular subject to plural suggests a collective embracing of the values of a Basque-oriented culture. And secondly, various misalignments with the original catchphrase can be observed that reflect local ways of speaking on three levels: grammar (with *dogu* replacing standard *dugu*), vocabulary (the use of *gura* for *nahi* 'to want'), and perhaps most importantly from the standpoint of this study, pronunciation. More specifically, the changes in the spelling of *euskeraz* and *gure* represent a vernacular phonological feature with great social variability. The quote on the wall may now be gone due to the remodelling of the town hall, but the underlying message remains one of self-assertion of local identity that appears to be central to an exhaustive sociophonetic analysis of Lezama Basque (henceforth LB).

1.2. The Basque language situation

The Basque language, also called *euskara*, is a non-Indo-European language isolate spoken in an area of 20,742 km^2 composed of the Western-Pyrenean territories in northern Spain and south-western France (Tovar, 1957, pp. 35-36; Urla, 2012, p. 1). The current boundaries of the Basque-speaking areas are shown in Map 1.1 below. Basque is spoken today by approximately 1,200,000 people, of which over 750,000 are native speakers (Basque Government, 2016). Of these, Cenoz (2001, p. 49) informs, a negligent portion of elderly population is strictly monolingual in Basque, whereas the rest are French/Spanish bilinguals. Although native speakers of Basque have been observed to show varying degrees of

command in the two neighbouring languages (Zalbide & Cenoz, 2008, p. 18), reports of generalised bilingualism date at least as far back as the early 19th century on the French side of the border (Oyharçabal, 1997, p. 29) and slightly later in the century on the Spanish side (Tovar, 1957, p. 34).

Map 1.1. Basque language area (from Encyclopædia Britannica, 2020)

Due to the language shift[1] process to which different Basque-speaking areas have been subjected, Basque speakers are unevenly distributed across the region (Fishman, 1991, pp. 54-5 & 159-160). Over 90% are found in *Hegoalde* 'the South', which corresponds to the Spanish provinces of Alava, Biscay, Gipuzkoa, and High Navarre; the remaining 10% resides in the French areas in *Iparralde* 'the North': Labourd, Low Navarre, and Soule (Urla, 2012, pp. 129-133; Urrutia, 2008, p. 181). These territories have traditionally been associated with one historically-rooted variety of Basque, as first classified by Bonaparte (1863) in the 19th century – to some, Aurrekoetxea (2009, pp. 127-8) clarifies, this one-to-one correspondence remains even today. One look at the current distribution of Basque regional dialects will

[1] The main reasons for language shift were the promotion of French as the only language of the newly formed Republic after the French Revolution, the high migration rates due to industrialisation, and the harsh repression policies during Franco's dictatorship in Spain (Lasagabaster, 2001, p. 403; Urla, 1988, p. 384).

suffice to understand that presuming univocal associations between dialect and region is not without problems.

Map 1.2. Current distribution of VB (Zuazo, 2020)

Map 1.2 shows the latest update on the current distribution of vernacular or traditional[2] dialects of Basque (hereafter VB). The main dialect areas are five: Western Basque, Central Basque, (High) Navarrese, Navarro-Labourdin, and Souletin. Besides, intermediate varieties, in faded colours, are found across the Basque-speaking region. The mismatch between VB boundaries in blue and territorial boundaries in red is clear, as reflected in the terminology, which does not assign one territory name exclusively to each variety. Although it would be unrealistic to expect Basque to have expanded more or less completely in *Hegoalde* and *Iparralde* regions (in particular, Alava and High Navarre), there are some overlapping dialects that cross territorial boundaries like Western Basque and, to a lesser extent, Navarro-Labourdin, and some wider-ranging dialects that bring more than one territory into one dialect are, e.g. Navarro-Labourdin.

The reason for such exclusion is that, in recent decades, governmental efforts to reverse language shift, especially through educational policies, the emergence of *euskara batua* 'unified Basque' (Standard Basque, henceforth SB), and strengthened communicative

[2] Other scholars (Oihartzabal, 1996; Urgell, 1985) use the term *literatur euskalkia* 'literary dialect' to refer to the traditional regiolects spoken and, most importantly, written in the Basque Country before standardisation. This does not, however, include all vernacular varieties of Basque since only some have a prolific history of textual representation (Oñederra, 2016a, p. 127).

ties amongst the Basques have increased the number of speakers considerably. As a result, Basque has regained areas that were lost to Romance dominance (Basque Government, 2016; Fishman, 1991, pp. 161-2; Urla, 2012, p. 83)[3]. Most remarkably, the implementation of Basque medium education is to be held responsible for the doubling of Basque speakers from 1991 to 2001 (Zalbide & Cenoz, 2008, p. 6).

Basque medium education first began in the late 1960s in the form of clandestine schools, and it was not until the early 1980s that Basque was granted official status alongside Spanish in the educational system in Spain[4] (Echeverria, 2003, p. 353; Lasagabaster, 2001, p. 404). The Basque educational system is divided into three linguistic models: D model (all subjects in Basque except for Spanish and an FL)[5], B model (half instruction in Basque, half in Spanish), and A model (all subjects in Spanish except for Basque and an FL) (Cenoz, 2001, p. 51). Despite institutional and social support, Basque remains a minority language: in the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC: Alava, Biscay, and Gipuzkoa), only 29.4%[6] of the population speaks Basque (Aizpurua Telleria & Aizpurua Espin, 2005, p. 44). As Fishman (1991, p. 161) points out, however, less populous communities seem to be an exception: "villages and towns of less than 2,000 inhabitants or of between 2,000 and 10,000 inhabitants are still the most heavily Basque--speaking in the BAC".

1.3. A widespread phenomenon I: Regional Dialect Levelling

A common development in the linguistic landscape of Europe has been the gradual loss of regionally marked forms in both rural and urban dialect areas in favour of features that have supra-local currency when speakers of different but mutually intelligible dialects come into contact (Auer, 1998, p. 1; Kerswill, 2002, p. 187; 2003, p. 224; Kerswill & Williams, 2002, p. 180; Pooley, 2012, p. 40). This contact-induced phenomenon is referred to as Regional Dialect Levelling (RDL), or simply levelling. In line with Kerswill (2002, pp. 187-8), it is typically driven by two tendencies: language-internally, by levelling 'proper', in Trudgill's (1986, p. 98) sense of "reduction or attrition of *marked* variants" [emphasis his]; and,

[3] For an explanation of earlier geo-linguistic variation in Basque and a comparison of dead dialects such as Eastern Navarrese, an interested reader is referred to Artola (1992; 2005), Bonaparte (1863), Gorrochategui (1995), and Zuazo (1989; 1995).

[4] Language policies in the Basque-speaking regions in Spain "vary from one area to the next" (Shabad & Gunther, 1982, p. 465), as the administrative regions where Basque is spoken recognise different levels of officiality. French legislation, on the contrary, offers no protection for Basque and only authorises the teaching of Basque on a volunteer basis (Coyos, 2006, p. 30; Urla, 2012, p. 3).

[5] The D model is favoured by the government and families (Perez-Izaguirre, 2018, p. 6).

[6] Etxeberria (1999, p. 58) observes that the percentage of Basque speakers in the BAC, 83% at the turn of the 20th century, plunged to approximately 24% by the end of Franco's regime.

language-externally, by geographical diffusion, whereby linguistic forms disseminate from economically and culturally dominant areas to other cities and towns. Primarily due to the prominence of SB, levelling seems to be a change in progress in Basque too (Unamuno & Aurrekoetxea, 2013, p. 154; Zuazo, 1998, p. 229).

In a review of the existing literature on language variation across generations in Basque, Unamuno and Aurrekoetxea (2013, pp. 154-5) report that a progressive withdrawal from what Bellmann labels "base dialect" (1998, p. 23) and convergence with supra-local norms are occurring in young speakers' speech. Various empirical studies have attempted to analyse the extent of this intergenerational variation in several dialect areas (Ariztimuño, 2009; Ormaetxea, 2008; Unamuno & Aurrekoetxea, 2013). However, levelling patterns in (segmental) phonology have been either glossed over (Gaminde & Romero, 2011, p. 127; Hualde, 2015, pp. 323-4) or ignored (see Ensunza, 2019; Unamuno & Aurrekoetxea, 2013) in observational studies on Basque RDL. Therefore, my study aims to fill this gap in order to measure the potential effects of SB on VB.

1.4. A widespread phenomenon II: Low Vowel Assimilation

A cross-dialectally common phonological process in Basque is the raising of /a/ to [e̯][7] after high vowels /i, u/ and semivowels /i̯, u̯/ (Hualde, 1991, Chapter 2). This is called Low Vowel Assimilation (LVA), and it is a 17th-century innovation that originated in the westernmost varieties of Basque and later spread to adjacent dialect areas in a non-homogeneous manner (Zuloaga, 2017, pp. 174-5). Today, LVA is widely attested, as documented by Hualde and Gaminde (1997, p. 212), in a large area spanning from western Biscay to eastern High Navarre. This alternation constitutes a noticeable point of departure from the behaviour of SB vowels (Oñederra, 2016b, p. 349), and has been reported to be and have been salient both diachronically (Urgell, 1985, p. 99; Zuloaga, 2017, pp. 189-190) and synchronically (Mitxelena, 1961, p. 51). In accordance with Gaminde (2007, p. 24-6), the most prominent instances of LVA use are found in Central Biscay.

Hualde (1991, p. 23) proposes the following formulation for the rule: a → e / V[+high](C)__, as in *sagarra* 'the apple' ([s̪a̯ara]) but *laguna* 'the friend' ([la̯une]). Compare *laguna* ([la̯una]) in SB. In an exhaustive examination of four Basque dialect areas, Hualde (ibid., Chapter 2) demonstrates that the domain of applicability of LVA is subject to regionally-conditioned constraints. Compounds and certain derivational suffixes like

[7] I will hereafter use [e] for convenience.

demonymic *-tar*, amongst others, do not provide targets for the rule. Where LVA is allowed, gradation effects are observed whereby, cross-dialectally, the most productive environments are: a) definite singular article *-a*, b) definite plural article *-ak*, c) numeral *bat*, and d) verbal clitic *da* (De Rijk, 1970, p. 157; Gaminde, 2007, p. 27; Hualde, 1991, p. 77; 2003, p. 45). As can be seen from these examples, LVA operates not only across morphemes (a-b), but also across phonological words (c); and it does not appear to be blocked by any intervening consonant (c-d).

In sociolinguistic terms, the picture of LVA in Basque is rather complex. It is only recently that variationist studies are being undertaken that describe the social conditioning of linguistic variables; therefore, it seems unreasonable to hope to rely on a wide range of empirical investigations on LVA. What has been said about the sociolinguistics of LVA, however, may indicate that research into the social distribution of the phenomenon would offer some valuable considerations of the mechanisms in charge of language change in Basque. Consistent with Trudgill (1986, p. 11), the salience of the phenomenon may have influenced the consolidation of LVA in various Basque dialect areas. In fact, as Haddican (2007, p. 701) suggests, salience may bear on the differential use rates that particularly salient forms are known to exhibit (Labov, 2001, p. 196) to both motivate language change and condition the constraint hierarchies which often lead changes in progress.

Despite the negative reports on social correlates of LVA in Arratia (Eguskiza, 2019, pp. 86-90), Gaminde and Romero (2011, pp. 119-120) have found interesting parameters of age-based, though not gender-based, differences in the use of raised forms in Bermeo – both Arratia and Bermeo are located in the Western Basque dialect area. In addition, contrary to Eguskiza's results, Aurrekoetxea (2006, p. 147) mentions LVA as one of the traditional dialect features that is now starting to show signs of what most probably is a rapid adoption of supra-local forms. Hualde (2015, p. 234), too, speculates that the survival of such locally innovative processes as LVA is unlikely not necessarily because of RDL, but because of the diminishing presence of distinctively Basque innovations. In consideration of these findings, LVA was selected as the focus of my study, especially when the realisation of raised or low variants seems to depend heavily on the direction of levelling.

1.5. Research questions and purposes

In what follows, I will conduct a sociolinguistic study of the distribution of LVA in a Western Basque town where the phenomenon seems to be productive: Lezama, a town of

roughly 2,400 inhabitants located near the westernmost end of the Western Basque dialect area (Bonaparte, 1862, p. 30; De Rijk, 1970, p. 161; Gaminde, 1993, pp. 113-4; Hualde & Gaminde, 1997, p. 228; Zuazo & Goiti, 2016, p. 21). I will investigate whether there is quantitative apparent-time support for a change in progress concerning LVA and, if so, who is in the vanguard of the change. The extent to which language attitudes and ingroup identification are relevant to the variability of LVA in Lezama will also be studied. More specifically, my research questions are as follows:

RQ1: Is Low Vowel Assimilation undergoing levelling in Lezama Basque?
RQ2: What is the social conditioning of the patterns of variation?
RQ3: What is the cause of the change?

In answering these questions, I aim to determine which social factors, if any, condition the occurrence of local variants in LB in order to illuminate broader understandings of RDL both in the context of the Basque language and in a more general framework of language variation. Following Foulkes and Docherty (2006, p. 411), my objective is to uncover linguistic correlates of social organisation in Lezama. Another goal of the present research is to be an empirical contribution to a relatively understudied field of Basque sociolinguistics: the position of pronunciation in a framework that considers intergenerational language variation. This is in keeping with the common view that acknowledges a higher degree of stability over speakers' lifespan in more abstract linguistic systems like phonology, which bears on the structural relations with other elements of grammar (Boberg, 2004, p. 265; Labov, 1994, pp. 111-2).

Due to Basque RDL, much of the diversity in the behaviour of vowel sequences in Basque – which has been instrumental in the discussion of phonological rule interaction and ordering (see Lakoff, 1993; Trask, 1996) – may die out soon. Besides, in accordance with Dorleijn and Nortier (2013, p. 36), looking into language-contact environments in which change "can be caught [...] 'red-handed'" may help unearth the social mechanisms in the outcome of RDL situations. In sum, it is my hope to advance our understanding of RDL by exploring what the study of minority languages like Basque can tell us about general trends in sociolinguistics. My selection of one particular town is also in line with Unamuno and Aurrekoetxea (2013, p. 152), who argue that "in cases of dialect levelling, it is very important to study linguistic variation within each locality to examine the linguistic differences between generations and to find out which are the linguistic features that have a tendency to change".

1.6. Thesis overview

This thesis consists of six sections: the introduction to the research, the theoretical framework in which it is situated, the methodology, the results obtained in the study, the discussion and interpretation of these findings, and an overall conclusion. In §1, I contextualise the present situation of the Basque language as well as the two topics with which I will be dealing (RDL and LVA), and describe the focus and main objectives of the study. Secondly, §2 provides a more comprehensive account of the sociolinguistics of Basque (pronunciation), the main social and linguistic patterns of RDL in Basque, the relevance of a variety social variables, and the status of LVA in Lezama. The methodology used in the investigation is outlined in §3, with special regard to the research technique employed, the speakers, the compiled material, and the procedures of the two sociolinguistic investigations performed. In §4 I present the results from the usage rates of LVA in the interviews and from the principal trends that emerged in the analysis of the attitude survey. Next, §5 addresses the interpretation and explanation of these results in a wider sociolinguistic framework. Finally, in §6 I try to answer the research questions related to the social conditioning of the distribution of LVA in LB.

2. Literature review

2.1. The sociolinguistics of Standard Basque pronunciation

2.1.1. *Euskara batua* and its pronunciation

In 1968 the Royal Academy of the Basque Language, *Euskaltzaindia*, laid down the principles of SB in terms of inflectional case endings, verbal conjugation, and syntax[8] (Oñederra, 2016a, p. 127; Urla, 2012, p. 83). Ibarzabal (2001, pp. 160-2) comments on the mixed nature of the consensual variety by pointing out that it draws heavily on Central and Navarro-Labourdin varieties[9]. This decision was based on the scriptural practices of the most active writers of the period, the higher number of speakers in Central and Navarro-Labourdin

[8] A common framework for the spelling of Basque was accepted in 1964, although further orthographic observations were made in 1968 (Hualde & Zuazo, 2007, p. 151). Much of the applicability of the 1964 report, however, could not be put into practice without a grammatical base (Urla et al., 2017, p. 26).

[9] In line with Hualde and Zuazo (2007, p. 147) and despite questioning the advisability of promoting a standard Basque language, Spanish philologist Menéndez Pidal (1962, p. 53) conceded that it was reasonable to base the projected standard on Central and Navarro-Labourdin varieties on account of their accessibility for all speakers of Basque and their entrenched literary tradition, which had at the time developed a relatively supra-regionalised orthography.

regions, and the historical pre-eminence of such regions. Hualde and Zuazo (2007, p. 147) argue that the central position of these two varieties in the VB continuum proved fundamental in their selection for SB.

It should be borne in mind that, although *Euskaltzaindia* made it explicit that their standard model was meant for written communication, the formation of SB and, particularly, the exclusion of some traditional varieties caused great controversy in certain portions of Basque society (Oñederra, 2016a, pp. 127-8). In the following years, the exiled Basque Government was first reluctant to follow *Euskaltzaindia*'s recommendations, especially because of its conservative nationalist influence. However, frictions were soon soothed away, possibly due to the new prospects for the Basque nationhood during the transition into democracy in Spain (1975-1978); and SB came to be accepted by what Haugen (1966, p. 933) calls the "influential groups" in the process of standardisation: educators (mainly in primary and secondary education), culturally active writers, and intellectuals with a wide-ranging public voice (Urla, Amorrortu, Ortega & Goirigolzarri, 2017, p. 26). Enthusiastic young urban speakers, too, adopted SB as a sign of post-Franco modernisation and Basque nationhood (Siguan, 1994, p. 67).

However, in the developments of the standardisation of Basque, no allowance was initially made for pronunciation. In the BAC, Public Basque Television and Radio began broadcasting simultaneously in Basque and Spanish in 1983. Generally, Basque radio and television consistently complied with SB rules, with very sporadic non-standard intrusions in short reporter interventions (Larrinaga Larrazabal, 2019, pp. 187-9). There was, nevertheless, no standard way of pronouncing Basque that the media, and possibly a large portion of the population that either taught or learned the language, believed necessary. In fact, as Oñederra (2016a, p. 132) says, confusion as to what pronunciation was required for each word led to the widespread adoption of spelling pronunciation.

Non-linguists' choice of a spelling pronunciation is not surprising. According to Jansen (2007, p. 31), Basque spelling is considerably phonetic, with sound-to-graph correspondences being relatively predictable. Amongst the various spelling pronunciations, one is shockingly noticeable to young ears: early teachers of SB required pronunciations of <h>, representing a glottal fricative in Souletin Basque but absent elsewhere (Hualde, 1991, p. 14), from learners of SB who most probably lacked /h/ in their native phonemic inventory, Basque or otherwise (Zuazo, 2008, p. 866). Interestingly, these teachers must have accepted Spanishised [x]-pronunciations as a realisation of <h>, an articulation that may strike Basque

speakers today as extremely uncommon or unheard of. Pronunciations that consisted in reading the spelling of words became the norm in settings that required the use of SB[10].

Euskaltzaindia, as Oñederra (2016a, p. 132) mentions, did not seem excessively worried about normative work on pronunciation. It was not until 1993, a decade after the first Basque broadcasts, that fixity of pronunciation was deemed relevant enough to commission a Pronunciation Committee. Hualde and Zuazo's remark that "the Academy felt compelled to codify the proper pronunciation" (2007, p. 153) suggests that Basque language scholars joined in the general trend to take "spoken language [...] for granted" (J. Milroy & L. Milroy, 1999, p. 55). After some years of internal conflicts on the functionality of a spoken standard, the Pronunciation Committee presented in 1998 the EBAZ[11] rules (Careful Pronunciation of Standard Basque), with "limited success", to use Oñederra's (2016a, p. 134) terms. I find her wording truthful, although, based on the literature (e.g. Urreta Elizegui, 2020, p. 30) and compared to SB, adding a qualifier like *very* would have been less of an understatement.

A variety of reasons contributed to the dismissal of EBAZ: a growing number of sceptics, even amongst academics; ineffective advertisement and poor explanations; the decline of commitment to Basque that was strongly felt at the time of the creation of SB; the transition of teaching Basque from militant devotion to contractual positions; persistent complaints of certain speakers that their variety had little representation; a sense of traditional dialect loss; and speaker orientations towards the rural- or traditional-sounding speech that was, if at all, very superficially influenced by Spanish immigrant waves to larger cities (A. Arauzo & X. Arauzo, 2010, pp. 56-58; Martínez de Luna & Azurmendi, 2005, p. 87; Oñederra, 2016a, pp. 134-6; Rada, 2015, pp. 95-7). This scenario brought about two possible outcomes for pronunciation patterns in Basque.

On the one hand, especially in education, public administration, television, and conservative radio stations, a less rigid spelling pronunciation model was promoted, in which articulations of <h> are only required in Souletin Basque. The picture of Basque in schools differs from the situation that Adonis and Pollard (1997, pp. 36-7) explain for England in the late 20th century: the dominant pronunciation in teachers' speech and, by extension, in that of most children whose contact with Basque is limited to the school is a combination of a dialectal pronunciation typical of the region of the teacher, which need not be the same as that of the students, and a spelling pronunciation (Ensunza, 2016, p. 87; Urla, 2012, p. 94).

[10] Leturiaga's (2018) study of the speech of present-day television newsreaders reveals differential patterns in the pronunciation of native words vis-à-vis Spanish/French loans: while Basque substrate words retain a Basque flavour, phonemic incidence in borrowings is more likely to resemble that of the source language.

[11] For a detailed explanation of EBAZ rules, see Oñederra's (1998a; 2016b, pp. 347-351) account.

On the other, adoption and, to some extent, reinforcement of traditional pronunciations occurs (Urreta Elizegui, 2020, p. 30)[12]. This is most visible in the case of radio stations whose target is a young audience, as shown by the prioritisation of dialect-preservation ideology and praxis in *Euskadi Gaztea* (Del Amo Castro, 2019, pp. 20-21; Elordui, 2016, p. 36). In fact, a shift towards heteroglossic media and the audience-specific diversification of the media have been widespread developments since the 1990s (see Coupland, 2007; Busch, 2006).

In relation to the normative treatment of Basque prosody, it is only recently that the Pronunciation Committee has tackled recommendations for intonational patterns, since, in line with Donegan and Stampe (1979, p. 142), suprasegmentals are the main factors in the classification of accents. Research (Elordieta, Gaminde, & Hualde, 1998; Oñederra, 1998b) has shown that the spoken standard in Basque tends to be mapped onto prosodic patterns of Spanish and French in both L2 and L1 speakers. This seems to be motivated by native speakers' accommodation to the intonation of non-natives, who they perceive as having a better command of SB. Gaminde (2011, pp. 81-2) has examined these patterns and identified a set of nascent prosodic features that, without prescriptive intervention, may continue to develop into standard intonation.

All in all, the process of standardisation of Basque pronunciation, as opposed to that of other linguistic domains, is still incomplete. Whereas SB has gone through all four of Haugen's stages (i.e. selection, codification, elaboration, and acceptance), EBAZ appears to be in the process of elaborating its functions (Hualde & Zuazo, 2007, pp. 151-158). Oñederra (2016a, p. 140) states that collective acceptance would "reinforce both the standard variety and the dialects and [...] reconcile antagonistic attitudes that could prove particularly destructive in the minority language split between two different bilingual areas". Since Basque has entered previously untrodden settings, a stylistically variable pronunciation model like EBAZ, as Oñederra (2016b, p. 352) posits, would aid in the expansion of Basque, especially for new speakers in more informal situations.

2.1.2. Attitudes to Standard and Vernacular Basque

Bourdieu (1991 [1982], pp. 60-2) lays the foundation for theorisations about the convertibility of ideological-linguistic constructs (e.g. attributions of prestige, group identification, authority) into forms of socio-political and economic capital, since the ability to reproduce the standard language is directly mapped onto higher status vis-à-vis the

[12] See B. O'Rourke (2017, pp. 88-90) for the comparable case of Galician.

different social outcomes to which vernacular speakers are subjected. This, however, seems more applicable in the case of state-supported majority languages; as a result, Urla et al. (2017, pp. 24-5) call for a reconsideration of the sociolinguistic workings of the standard in minority settings. They explain that alternative linguistic markets are formed from the different pathways of language acquisition and dissemination that stem from the specific social movements and corresponding language policies in standardised minority languages.

One way of understanding this is through the notion of *new speakers* in B. O'Rourke, Pujolar, and Ramallo's sense of "individuals with little or no home or community exposure to a minority language but who instead acquire it through immersion or bilingual educational programs, revitalization projects or as adult language learners" (2015, p. 1). For these new speakers, as B. O'Rourke (2017, p. 90) puts it, a desire for authenticity supersedes the value of linguistic 'correctness' and anonymity attributed to the standard, since these values are generally taken to refer to evaluations of linguistic variants that hinge on indexical neutrality (Woolard, 2008, p. 2; 2016, p. 17). This is in line with Hualde and Zuazo's claim that "at the time of its selection by the Basque Academy, [SB] was nobody's spoken language" (2007, p. 152).

A quick consultation in any modern Basque dictionary may illuminate B. O'Rourke's observations. To name one, *Harluxet Encyclopædic Dictionary* includes in its entries of *euskaldun* 'speaker of Basque' two terms that are of particular sociological interest: *euskaldun zahar* 'old speaker of Basque' (a speaker whose L1 is Basque) and, more importantly, *euskaldun berri* 'new speaker of Basque' (a speaker whose L1 is not Basque). These lexicalised distinctions are surprising considering the recency of the academic coining of *new speaker*[13], yet they appear to be collocations with wide currency in Basque that have been growing in popularity from the 1960s onwards, often used in a way that differs from their semantic delimitations in linguistics and that is highly informative about deep sociocultural implications of access to, and command in, VB (Kintana, 1980, p. 186; B. O'Rourke, Pujolar, & Ramallo, 2015, p. 3; Ortega, Urla, Amorrortu, Goirigolzarri, & Uranga, 2015, p. 86).

In their study of attitudes of new speakers towards SB, Urla et al. (2017, pp. 30-4) show that the main features enregistered as SB are regional neutrality and a lack of fluency in vernacular forms (closely related to Labov's (1973, p. 83) concept of "lameness"). Another recurrent pattern observed by Urla et al. (2017, pp. 34-5) seems to be that, for most new

[13] The first attestation in the scholarly literature within a framework of (socio)linguistics is attributed to Robert (2009).

speakers of Basque, especially in non-Basque-dominant areas, speaking SB is incompatible with concealing oneself in the anonymity attributed to standard languages, since Basque has been historically tied with social commitment and political militancy against the spread of neighbouring languages. Similarly, as Urla et al. (2017, pp. 29-30) suggest, the restricted, high-register sociopolitical practices that circulate SB to the exclusion of VB are at work in defining the reception of the standardisation of Basque – there is a great civic engagement in activities that are conducted primarily not in SB but in VB, e.g. music festivals and popular theatrical plays.

Additionally, Urla et al. (2017, pp. 34-5) claim that, contrary to what is expected from the logic of standardisation, new speakers do not consider themselves sufficiently legitimised to speak Basque. Consequently, they report difficulty to appreciate their own speech despite acknowledging the utility of SB not as a prestige variety, but as a lingua franca (ibid., p. 138). One factor in justifying this behaviour may be the meagre socioeconomic rewards of proficiency in SB in the 2000s (usually other varieties are accepted), as observed by Gardner (2000, p. 36). Also related to the findings in Urla et al. (2017) is Jaffe's (2015, p. 38) consideration that new speakers' failure to ratify themselves as legitimate speakers of the language is a cause for self-stigmatisation reinforced by old speakers' rejection of the standard. With that information, perceptions of new speakers are not to be ignored in the case of Basque. Remember that, out of the nearly 1,200,000 speakers of Basque today, 450,000 are *euskaldun berriak*, and that most of these are young speakers under the age of 35 (Zalbide & Cenoz, 2008, p. 6). These figures suggest that new speakers of Basque are a not-so-minor minority that, other things being equal, is likely to continue to be in the ascendant.

For *euskaldun zaharrak* as well as a majority of *euskaldun berriak*, as Jaffe (1999, pp. 170-6) explains, developing a sentiment of detachment from, or even animosity towards, the implementation of a standard language is a common phenomenon in the context of a purported threat to the status or integrity of traditional dialects. This, as mentioned above, has been invoked as one of the many reasons for the dismissal of EBAZ, but it plays a fundamental role in the low acceptance rates for spelling pronunciations too (Oñederra, 2016a, p. 129). These orientations are particularly found in the generations of Basque speakers born during the 1970s – these were briefly or altogether not schooled in Basque medium education because it became more widespread in the 1990s (Larringan, 2000, pp. 66-7; Zalbide, 1990, p. 30). Following Oñederra (1992, p. 145) and Zuazo (1999, p. 359), this is contrasted with the embarrassment and sense of inferiority that the old generations

experienced when they heard their grandchildren speak as they were taught in the first (clandestine) Basque medium schools in the 1960s.

Language and identity are tightly intertwined in the case of Basque, and the 'authentic' vernacular is attributed the most prestige (Amorrortu, 2003, p. 160; Echeverria, 2003, p. 366). In line with a social-network account (J. Milroy & L. Milroy, 1999, p. 49), loyalty to VB, which are at their strongest in small rural areas (Fishman, 1991, p. 161), and ingroup solidarity often lead to less positive evaluations of SB (see Amorrortu, 2000; 2001; 2012; Ciriza, 2009). In a matched guise experiment using Spanish, SV, and VB, Echevarria (2005, p. 258) finds, for instance, that higher solidarity values are assigned to VB than SB by new and old young speakers of Basque alike in Donostia, the capital city of Gipuzkoa where the spread of SB has been generalised. She also shows that, even for bilingual speakers schooled in Spanish-medium education, VB scores higher values than both SB and Spanish. Similarly, Fernández-Ulloa (1997, p. 212) reports overall unfavorable attitudes to the teaching of SB or Spanish in three age groups of *euskaldun zaharrak* in Northern Biscay.

The results from these investigations may make a case for the consideration of VB, not SB, as challenging Spanish hegemonic practices, since it appears to have taken up "a surplus of sociolinguistic meaning" (Woolard, 2003, p. 86). Moreover, Amorrortu (2000, pp. 151-4; 2001, p. 72) shows that Western Basque speakers rate Western Basque higher than SB on both a solidarity and professionalism scale. Her findings indicate that, besides the prestige and instrumental value of the language, language planners "need to stress solidarity and integrative values" (Amorrortu, 2000, p. 219) assigned exclusively to VB. In fact, for Western Basque youths, hybridisation of VB with the standard is evaluated negatively as a sign of failure to uphold values that are indexical of 'authentic Basqueness' vis-à-vis the non-representativeness of SB (Amorrortu, 2003, p. 160). This is consistent with Beola (2013, p. 424), who reports that animosity towards SB is generally found in Western Basque speakers.

2.2. Regional Dialect Levelling in Basque

2.2.1. Mobility, dialect contact, and diffusion

As Williams and Kerswill (1999, p. 150) argue, geographical mobility shows strong correlations with RDL, since mobile populations are more likely to engage in processes of dialect dissemination and accommodation to others to avoid marked forms (Trudgill, 1986, p. 25). Constant reproduction of patterns of accommodation often results in the dominance of

the variant with the "widest geographical (and social) usage", in Trudgill's (ibid., p. 98) words. Large-scale studies on the effects of geographical mobility on the intergenerational transmission of Basque are still scarce. To my knowledge, only Beola (2013) evaluates sources that may inform future research into contact-induced change in Basque. Based on the increased contact of the coming generations with SB and the rising housing prices in the countryside, Beola (ibid., p. 244) predicts immediate short-distance mobility. In addition, as the young-adult speakers pushed out of their hometowns still have a strong attachment to, and involvement in, their town, it is safe to assume that mixing foci are likely to proliferate.

In accordance with Urla (2012, p. 93), acceptance rates of SB have been highest in Central Basque areas. An indicator of that is the high Basque-proficiency percentages in Donostia as opposed to other major cities in the Basque Country – 60-80% of Donostians at least understand Basque (Zubiria-Kamino, 2017) and over 30% were Basque-dominant (Cenoz, 2001, p. 47). This is understandable in that, because Central Basque was selected as the main contributor to SB, there is a strong correlation between its morpho-syntactic and lexical features and those of SB, which would have facilitated the learning and alphabetisation in SB (Amorrortu, 2000, p. 45). Although *Euskaltzaindia* has issued little normativisation on the permissibility of lexical items from traditional dialects, Urla (2012, p. 93) holds that lay perceptions of linguistic proximity and general frequencies of vocabulary use in the media have contributed to the idea that Central Basque is closest to SB amongst all traditional dialects.

It would, then, be reasonable to propose a model, as Fabricius (2005, pp. 126-128) does with Received Pronunciation, Estuary English, and London English, that places SB and Central Basque on a continuum[14]. Gipuzkoa, the area roughly corresponding to where Central Basque is spoken, has the highest density of Basque-speaking population – over half of Gizpuzkoans speak Basque (Urla, 2012, p. 2). Maia (2000, p. 593) suggests that the prestige status of Central Basque amongst other varieties may have resulted in stylistic diversification within the variety, a rare phenomenon in Basque (Oñederra, 2016a, p. 135). A supra-regionalised form of Central Basque may fill the intermediate slot in the social dialect continuum model alongside SB and broader Central Basque.

Similarly, in the North, SB is becoming increasingly accepted (Cenoz, 2001, p. 48; Hualde & Zuazo, 2007, p. 158). Davant (1996, pp. 531 & 533) identifies two strongholds of

[14] This is compatible with Auer and Hinskens' (1996, pp. 7-8) claim that vernacular dialects form a gradable continuum with standard dialects based on mutual intelligibility, especially when processes of convergence between the two take effect.

resistance to VB: liturgy[15] and, to a lesser extent, literature. He reports that Basque-medium schools are transitioning into SB due to the higher Basque alphabetisation in Labourd, where ties with the South have been maintained (ibid., pp. 532 & 535). As Maia and Larrea (2008, p. 130) point out, the concentration of school material production in the South and its subsequent distribution across the North may have had a bearing on the standardisation of school language in the North. Elsewhere the shift to SB is noteworthy, especially in coastal urban areas, where the percentage of Basque speakers is low[16] (Davant, 1996, p. 535).

Despite the drop, amongst others, in young speakers liable to perform at *pastoralak* (traditional plays written and declamated in VB) that Hualde and Zuazo (2007, p. 158) mention, an attitude survey recently conducted by Coyos (2019, pp. 122-124) shows that convergence into SB appears to be accompanied by increasing rates of acceptance. Northern Basque speakers view SB as helpful and necessary, probably due to the exposure to SB materials produced down South, the lack of governmental support for the preservation of Basque, and the more acute endangerment situation in the North. More precisely, Basque speakers in Labourd, the most influential area in the Northern Basque Country, have increased by 20% from 1996 to 2011 under the influence of SB (Zubiria-Kamino, 2017). Respondents of the survey give answers that are unsurprisingly similar to the positivist atmosphere characteristic of the 1968 South, where a sense of language militancy was strongly felt.

The case of the towns that have traditionally been linguistically northern but geographically southern, such as Urdazubi and Zugarramurdi, is illustrative of Spanish-French border dynamics. A considerable portion of the elderly population commuted to the more influential towns like Sara and Ainhoa across the border for work, which reinforced their northern linguistic ties (Zuazo, 2003, pp. 12-3); Montoya (2004, pp. 262-3), however, provides apparent-time evidence of recession of northern variants and almost complete shift not towards High Navarrese but SB in the younger generations. One possible explanation for such a drastic change may be that, although connections with northern towns are not completely lost, some of the traditional practices that united people on both sides of the border (e.g. fairs, seasonal harvesting, husbandry, contraband) are no longer seen as practical.

[15] Note, however, that the number of Catholics in *Iparralde* is decreasing (Etxezaharreta, 2002, p. 662).

[16] Towns in Low Navarre and Soule retain a higher number of speakers (60-80% on average) because the foci of industrialisation that sprouted in the mid-to-late 20th century were located in Labourd (Aragón-Ruano, 1999, p. 26; Uriarte-Ayo, 1988, p. 144; Zubiria-Kamino, 2017). Another determining factor may be that, while urban centres in Labourd like Baiona and Hendaia have 50,000 and 17,000 inhabitants respectively, Donibane Garazi and Maule, capitals of Low Navarre and Soule, have 1,500 and 3,000 inhabitants.

This, along with the economic crisis in the Northern Basque Country and the now stricter customs, has led to the disappearance of intermarriage and the quicker linguistic absorption of Urdazubi and Zugarramurdi into supra-local norms (Zuazo, 2003, p. 98).

In contrast, Western Basque areas, and especially Biscay, present a different scenario. Juaristi (2007, p. 49) reports a slight recession in the Basque-speaking population from 2001 to 2006 (11% to 10.4%); and in fact, in a large part of the population (Eastern Biscay, including the capital city Bilbao), only around 40% understand Basque (Zubiria-Kamino, 2017). This contrasts sharply with the percentage of such population in most of the remaining areas in Biscay, with 80-99% of passive bilinguals. These are primarily composed of small rural towns or semi-urbanised larger towns that still retain a high number of Basque-dominant speakers. The expansion of SB appears to have been somewhat decelerated arguably due to the implementation of Western Basque models of instruction, as opposed to the above-mentioned provinces. This, coupled with the structural and intelligibility distance between SB and Western Basque (Martínez-Areta, 2013, p. 32) as well as the SB-rejecting attitudes observed amongst Western Basques (Amorrortu, 2000, p. 45), may have restricted the access to Basque outside school for those who could not reproduce VB speech patterns.

Taken together, social processes that have contributed to the spread of SB, and thus, dialect mixing are common in most Basque-speaking regions. The pictures of Central Basque and Western Basque areas emerge as opposite even though they share a fundamental feature that results in mixing of different vernaculars rather than SB: the outward tendency, or obligation, when it comes to finding housing in younger generations. Therefore, the social dynamics and behaviours discussed here seem to make Western Basque areas an optimal testing ground for the claims that are being made about the generalisability of exposure to SB as the main driving factor for RDL.

2.2.2. Levelling and supra-localisation

Fishman (1991, p. 344) argues that "the standard comes not to displace or replace the dialects, but to complement them in functions which they do not generally discharge and, therefore, in functions that do not compete with their own". This appears to be in line with Oñederra's (2016a, p. 135) claim that, until the creation of SB, Basque had not developed much stylistic variation[17], with the exception, perhaps, of Central Basque. Moreover, Urla,

[17] Aske (1997, pp. 60-2) demonstrates that, while young speakers tend towards SVO word orders more than older speakers, they are now progressively showing style shifting to SOV patterns as formality of context increases, arguably due to their exposure to SOV word orders in (written) SB.

Amorrortu, Ortega, and Goirigolzarri (2016, pp. 9-10) characterise SB as "fail[ing] to consolidate a position of authority and prestige over vernacular because it occupies a very specific and limited niche in the limited public sphere of regional institutions". On closer inspection, however, the growing number of Basque speakers who only speak SB and the evidence of RDL (Gaminde & Romero, 2011, p. 127; Unamuno & Aurrekoetxea, 2013, p. 154; Zuazo, 1998, p. 229) point in a different direction. The complementarity of domains to which Fishman seems to refer is not compatible with explanations of levelling that permeate the sociolinguistic literature, as features from SB have been reported to prevail over VB forms.

Comparisons with dialectological accounts of Basque from the 19th century led Zuazo (1998, p. 229; 1999, p. 361) to observe a cross-dialectal decline in regionally marked forms and convergence with supra-local patterns in Basque. Auer and Hinskens (1996, p. 6) concede that, in cases of structural convergence, linguistic assimilation may occur either towards a standard or a vernacular. Nevertheless, the majority of studies on Basque RDL have focussed on convergence to SB (e.g. Aurrekoetxea, 2004, p. 49; Landa, 2006, p. 64), substantiating claims about generalised trends towards what Zelaieta (2004, p. 229) calls "standardised local Basques" [my translation].

Despite the shorter time period in which SB may have interfered with VB due to the late standardisation, evidence that confirms the levelling of regionally marked features is broad. This is referred to in the literature as "vertical convergence", as opposed to the "horizontal convergence" between different vernaculars (Auer, 1998; Hinskens, 1998). One of the few studies that have identified horizontal patterns is Haddican (2003, p. 28), who finds that Central Basque features have straddled through the speech of young males the dialect boundaries that bordered on the Gipuzkoan town of Oiartzun (an intermediate dialect area that has traditionally tended towards High Navarrese). Considering the nature of mobility in the Basque Country, horizontal levelling seems to be more likely in intermediate dialect areas like Goizueta, where convergence phenomena towards Central Basque are observable as well (Lujanbio Begiristain, 2016, pp. 220-2).

Studies on levelling have provided mixed evidence concerning the role of age in the shift towards regional standards. Some (Ariztimuño, 2009, pp. 91-2; Landa, 2006, p. 63; Zelaieta, 2004, p. 236) show divergence in adult speech from VB, further accentuated in young speakers. Others (Aurrekoetxea, 2006, p. 141; Ensunza, 2019, p. 24; Ormaetxea, 2008, p. 259; 2011, p. 39) suggest that there is no significant quantitative drop in the use of VB forms in adult speech, but young speakers lead the shift towards regional standards. These

two perspectives attest to the different contact situations and quality of contact to which vernaculars have been subjected. On the one hand, adult speech from areas like Tolosa-Ataun and Bera (where Central Basque and High Navarrese are spoken, respectively) is visibly moving towards supra-localisation. On the other, and not coincidentally, where resistance to SB has been strongest (i.e. Western Basque areas like Arratia, Busturialdea, Otxandio, and Aramaio), adult speakers exhibit a stronger adherence to VB. In the absence of speech data from the generation of today's elderly people's parents, one may hypothesise that, in the former case, elderly speakers were the first initiators of shy innovations whereas, in the latter case, it is adults that started adopting these changes.

2.2.3. Levelling in Basque pronunciation?

The studies discussed so far have generally addressed levelling phenomena in morpho-syntax and lexis, perhaps because of the earlier establishment of standardisation in these two domains. In his exhaustive study in Arratia, Aurrekoetxea (2006, p. 144) shows lowest scores of convergence in phonology (e.g. palatalisation, word-final vowel behaviour, segment deletions). Even more conservative in phonology are young speakers from Goierri, who Aurrekoetxea (2004, p. 53) observes present a non-significant difference from adults. Later studies by Lujanbio Begiristain (2012, pp. 88-9) confirm this stronger resistance to levelling in pronunciation.

Conversely, Haddican reports greater levelling in vowel apheresis (2003, p. 20) and /t/-palatalisation (2007, p. 693) in Oiartzun. The development of the former is noticeably interesting in that younger speech seems to have recovered apheretic forms after a decline in adult use. Haddican (2007, p. 699) grounds the faster shift in these features in their non-emblematicity, as they do not appear to be salient to Oiartzuners. The pronunciation patterns of current school teachers, one that combines spelling pronunciation and dialectal features (Ensunza, 2016, p. 87; Urla, 2012, p. 94), is likely to have affected Oiartzun too due to its proximity to Donostia, where teachers are likely to commute from. This supports the assumptions that RDL is now beginning to gradually affect phonology as a result of the late formation of a supra-local way of pronouncing Basque.

Consistent with Urla (2012, p. 101), the retention of segmental features of the vernacular of Basque youths, as compared with grammar and vocabulary, has been due to the inability of SB to accommodate colloquial styles and the greater structural differences between standard and vernacular pronunciation. By contrast, and as noted in §2.1.1 above,

suprasegmental features of pronunciation appear to provide more liable targets for levelling owing to the homogenisation of Basque intonational patterns (Gaminde, 2011, pp. 76-8). Hualde and Zuazo (2007, pp. 155-6) state that accentual properties that differ from SB (e.g. pitch-accent systems) are being systematically levelled, resulting in a gradual loss of contrastive word-stress, for instance, in Lezo (Mata, 2013) and Mutriku (Urkiza-Sesma, 2014). This correlates with the surprisingly uniform agreement that Gaminde (2011, p. 82) finds in the prosody of young speakers in careful speech (though with some region-dependent minor differences of pitch-accentedness). However, as Aurrekoetxea, Gaminde, Iglesias, and Gandarias (2013, p. 262) note, more exhaustive parameterisations of all Basque accentual systems are needed for a better understanding of which areas are undergoing change.

2.3. Social correlates of variation in Basque

2.3.1. Age

As implied throughout §2.2, age-based language variation is central to the present investigation in that intergenerational language shift is at the core of the study of RDL. In fact, as Labov (1994, p. 112) claims, "generational change rather than communal change is the basic model for sound change". However, Cheshire (1987, p. 766) and Eckert (1997, p. 167) hold that it is only recently that age has explicitly become the primary focus of sociolinguistic research for purposes other than diachronic studies, for example: Plack, Sankoff, and Miller (1988) and Schilling (2005).

One synchronic way of understanding the mechanism of diachronic change has been through approaches that rely on the apparent-time hypothesis, which assumes that language only minimally changes in adulthood and that one's speech represents the state of the language as acquired in childhood (Meyerhoff, 2018, p. 135). Therefore, a remarkable difference from adult speakers to young speakers at an exact point in time is generally taken to signify a generational change in the speech community. According to Chambers (1995, pp. 158-9), middle-aged speakers tend to have more or less regularised their vernacular. Nevertheless, some studies (e.g. Boberg, 2004, pp. 250-3; Yaeger-Dror, 1994, p. 282) have reported post-acquisition adoption of minor linguistic features in adults who have been influenced by young speakers' innovations.

To corroborate these apparent-time assumptions, Boberg (2004, p. 251) argues, age-grading hypotheses, whereby innovative linguistic forms decline in usage when speakers

enter into adulthood, need to be rejected. The following procedure is to compare apparent-time data with real-time data from an earlier historical period in the same community. Access to such data, however, is restricted (Meyerhoff, 2018, p. 138), as with endangered languages like Basque that have few older recordings available. When contrasting apparent-time data with real-time sources, the outcomes are: 1) confirmation of the apparent-time hypothesis if old participants speak the same way as when they were young, or 2) support of the age-grading hypothesis if old participants are shown to have spoken like young participants when they were young (Boberg, 2004, p. 251).

As for the age-correlated patterns of language variation, Williams and Kerswill (1999, p. 152) indicate that it is in the teenage speech of the generation following the first contact situation that the most conclusive signs of focussing on a given form can be observed. This is in line with general sociolinguistic trends (e.g. Eckert, 1988; 1989a) that agree that adolescents usually are in the vanguard of linguistic change. Eckert (1997, p. 164) also shows that adult speech is often characterised by increased conservatism – this is supported, especially in the case of older females, by Clarke's (1982, p. 102) study on Newfoundland English. However, evidence opposing the universality of such claims is also found: in his study of Canadian English, Boberg (2004, p. 265) remarks that "the main character of post-acquisition change [is] not rejection of innovative forms as people grow older [...], but adoption of innovative forms by a subset of older people who continue to participate in change in later life" arguably due to the salience of innovations. Similarly, Paunonen (1996, pp. 382-3) finds that Finnish middle-aged females display a movement away from normative variants as they grow older.

A current line of research in Basque sociolinguistics is tackling age to make generalisations about RDL. In line with Eckert (1988; 1989a; 1997), Basque youths have generally been observed to lead innovative changes (Aurrekoetxea, 2010, p. 98; Haddican, 2003, p. 31; Unamuno & Aurrekoetxea, 2013, p. 155; Urkiza-Sesma, 2014, pp. 196-7). For adult speakers, claims of conservatism are also confirmed (Eguzkiza, 2019, p. 319; Gaminde & Romero, 2011, p. 119). In some cases, however, age-related patterns of variation appear to overlap with the gender dimension, as sometimes only adult males behave conservatively (Ensunza, 2016, p. 88) and others adult females tend towards less innovative patterns (Haddican, 2007, p. 693).

2.3.2. Gender

Another one of the most-frequently studied social variables is gender (Eckert, 1989b, p. 246; Murphy, 2010, p. 29). One of the main findings in modern sociolinguistics about the language-gender interface, following Labov (2001, p. 367), is that "women deviate less than men from linguistic norms when the deviations are overtly proscribed, but more than men when the deviations are not proscribed". This axiom results from what Woods (1997, p. 97) labels "apparently contrasting trends of conservatism and innovation in female speech". In fact, there exists robust evidence for women's adherence to forms that are conservative, standard, and prestigious (Eisikovits, 1988; Holmes, 1993). At the same time, however, a growing body of literature suggests a female lead in ongoing linguistic changes (J. Milroy & L. Milroy, 1985; Tagliamonte, 2005)[18].

Some sociolinguists (e.g. Cameron & Coates, 1989; J. Milroy & L. Milroy, 1993) see attributions of female language use to the prestige of variants as problematic because the ability of certain groups to make language forms prestigious is dismissed. For example, Trudgill (1972, pp. 193-4) identifies over-reports of standard language use in females and under-reports in males in Norwich, which seems to indicate that women orient themselves more towards overtly prestigious forms and, alternatively, men align with covertly prestigious forms. It should be borne in mind, as Romaine (2003, p. 104) argues, that these are not necessarily reliable indicators of the social aspirations of female speakers. All these considerations provide insight into possible gender correlates of language change.

Turning now to Basque data, gender has yielded inconclusive results: while young males seem to lead the adoption of incoming Central variants in Oiartzun (Haddican, 2003, p. 31), they act more conservatively in retaining palatalisation in Gernika-Lumo (Ensunza, 2016, p. 88). The case of palatalisation is interesting because adult females are described as "the engine of the change [of the loss of palatalisation]" (Ensunza, 2016, p. 84); yet a few towns away from Gernika-Lumo, Zubilaga and Gaminde (2010, p. 7) find that palatalisation is most often maintained by Lekeitio females. On the contrary, Haddican (2007, p. 693) reports no significant correlation between palatalisation and gender, nor does Urkiza-Sesma (2014, p. 197) for intonation. The conflicting data from so many locations, both similar and diverse, suggests that the significance of gender is heavily dependent on other social conditions specific to the members of a community. An additional example is given by a comparison of the data from neighbouring Ultzama (Ibarra, 1995, p. 273) and Zugarramurdi

[18] See Labov (1991) for a summary of the evidence.

(Montoya (2004, p. 258): females from Ultzama tend towards affricating /ʃ/ whereas Ultzaman males and all Zugarramurdians keep a fricative articulation.

Therefore, it seems reasonable to look into how Basque men and women assign value to given linguistic variants beyond the general VB-oriented tendencies outlined in §2.1.2. Reminiscent of Gal and Irvine's (1995, p. 970) contention that gender difference influences the opposition between the emerging standard and the local dialect, Echeverria (2000, p. 240) holds that solidarity with VB is higher in males according to the gendered distribution of allocutive verbs in secondary schools in Donostia. Haddican (2005, pp. 180-1) provides perceptual evidence of an unmarked female preference for non-allocutive verbs. These associations stand in opposition to the masculine, unmarked standard language formed in 19th-century Japan (Momoko, 2008, p. 29). Another counterexample to Echeverria's (2000) formulation of gender-prestige identifications is found in evaluations of language in Northern Biscay. Fernández-Ulloa (1997, p. 213) proves that, although no gender distinction exists in the attitudes to Basque versus Spanish, females in all age groups show significantly higher solidarity regarding the benefits of VB (females 80%, males 60%).

2.3.2. Language attitudes and speech communities

Despite the importance of age- and gender-based examinations, it is equally important to ask whether attitudes to language variation and use have a bearing on the forms used by speakers. In his pioneering work on sociolinguistics, Weinreich (1953, pp. 3-4) identifies the attitudinal stances of speakers towards their language and the language of others as influential factors conducive to language change. This potential of speakers' evaluations of language varieties is also acknowledged by Haddican (2003, p. 32), who agrees that "a more thorough understanding is needed of speakers' attitudes toward these varieties in order to understand [the] processes of change and dialect contact". Cheshire, Gillett, Kerswill, and Williams (1999, p. 9) also consider the possibility of uniformity of attitudes in several British schools being "part of the mechanism of levelling".

Likewise, Poplack and Levey (2010, p. 399) and Sato (1991, p. 658) argue for a reevaluation of correlations between individual attitudes and the direction of language change. Following L. Milroy (2002, p. 161), Labov's (1963) often-quoted study in Martha's Vineyard shows that adherence to local forms is grounded in speakers' solidarity towards conceptualisations of insider/outsider; therefore, so long as indexicality of such categories is functional, some linguistic developments remain ideologically-driven. It is true, however, that

Labov himself (2001, p. 191) concedes that findings about associations of the direction of language change with projected degrees of local identification are relatively rare. He then adds that "it is good practice to consider first the simpler and more mechanical view that social structure affects linguistic output through changes in frequency of interaction" (ibid., p. 506), as with the effects of accommodation in face-to-face interaction on RDL.

Research into language attitudes in contact situations has been broad (see Garrett, Coupland, & Williams, 2003; E. O'Rourke, 2005; Pope, Meyerhoff, & Ladd, 2007; Ries, 2014; Smakman, 2006), but these studies have focussed on the survival, vitality, maintenance and/or formation of varieties rather than on the interplay between speaker attitudes and patterns of convergence. However, some recent studies (Elordieta & Romera, in press; Rodríguez & Elordieta, 2017; Romera & Elordieta, 2013; Urtzelai Vicente, 2018) have informed hypotheses supporting attitudinal correlates of convergence in previously untapped fields of inquiry like prosody.

In terms that are translatable into the Basque case, one ideological construct that tends to govern perceptions of language is the attachment to the vernacular of one's own hometown, even more so than that of region-wide vernaculars. Urla et al. (2017, p. 39) understand this homeward trend as being a result of marginalisation, which in turn enriches the larger expressive system replete with endo-indexical practices. Andersen (1988, p. 70) defines this as a community drive to protect the local vernacular from supra-local variants by adhering to regionally marked forms from the hometown. This ties in closely with evidence supporting the claim that smaller towns develop greater resistance to levelling vis-à-vis larger neighbouring towns (Ariztimuño, 2009, p. 93).

Underlying these observations is the notion of social network, as understood in the framework developed by L. Milroy (1987). According to J. Milroy and L. Milroy (1999, p. 49), social network theory accounts, amongst others, for the maintenance of linguistic distinctiveness in communities via pressure exerted by aspirations to group membership and informal activities carried out through ingroup language interaction. Cheshire et al. (1999, p. 2) suggest that these social networks, especially of the dense and multiplex kind, conform into a type of language that often inhibits change like levelling. J. Milroy and L. Milroy (1999, p. 49) further categorise the concepts of density as the quantity of ties within a community (e.g. small rural towns), and multiplexity as a function of the quality of such ties.

2.4. LVA in Lezama

As mentioned above, LVA is a cross-dialectally widespread development in Basque that Hualde (2013, p. 234) defines as one of the few "[Basque's] own phonological innovations". Although the exact nature of the resultant vowel appears to be true-mid [e̞] in most dialects (Flemming, 1995, p. 40; Hualde, 2003, p. 46), Yrizar (1991, p. 336) has found that the assimilated vowel is of a more open quality, [ɛ], only in the speech of rural Azkoitia and Azpeitia in Gipuzkoa. Thus, as Flemming (1995, p. 40) and Hualde (2003, p. 45) explain, in some places like Lezama the phenomenon results in the neutralisation of the phonetic contrast between /a/ and /e/ when preceded by /i, i̯, u, u̯/; compare *izan* 'to be' and *izen* 'name' (Hualde, 1991, p. 26). As noted in §1.4, however, this conditioned merger is subject to various locally-determined applicability constraints.

LVA has been described as typical of the speech of Lezama (Bonaparte, 1862, p. 30; De Rijk, 1970, p. 161; Gaminde, 1993, pp. 113-4; Hualde & Gaminde, 1997, p. 228; Zuazo & Goiti, 2016, p. 21). For example, following Gaminde (2006, p. 65), LB shows fossilisations of LVA in specific lexical items like *zenbet* (*zeinbat* > *zeinbet* > *zenbet*) 'how much/many' as an indication of the history of LVA in the local vernacular (Zuloaga, 2017, p. 177). Based on Gaminde's (2006) lexical data and the *Lezamako Toponimia* written corpus of local onomastics (Bidart-Meabe & Etxebarria-Lejarreta, 2003), LVA meets many of the requisites proposed for a feature to be considered salient:

- *Involvement in an ongoing change* (Trudgill, 1986, p. 11): despite providing evidence that phonology is less affected by levelling, Aurrekoetxea (2006, p. 147) refers to LVA as a process that has shown signs of supra-localisation.
- *Existence of a radically different competing variant* (Trudgill, 1986, p. 11): LVA is disfavoured in SB and EBAZ, and is never represented in the standard spelling (Oñederra, 2016b, p. 349).
- *High frequency of use* (Bardovi-Harlig, 1987, pp. 402-3): Gaminde's (2006) glossary of LB vocabulary reveals that pronunciations with the local variant with [e] are dominant in Lezama.
- *Respellings* (Honeybone & Watson, 2013, p. 315; Miethaner, 2000, p. 535; Watson & Clark, 2013, p. 302)[19]: the painting on the Lezama Town Hall wall and the many <e>-

[19] Recall that, as Zuloaga (2017, pp. 189-190) remarks, <e>-spellings are found in literature at least from the 17th century, especially in Western use. However, Urgell (1985, p. 99) explains that pre-20th-century Basque

spellings found in the transcriptions of Lezama residents' testimonies from *Lezamako Toponimia* attest to this.

- *Neutralisation of phonological contrasts* (Trudgill, 1986, p. 11; Warren & Hay, 2006, p. 111; Watson & Clark, 2013, p. 320)[20].

Trudgill (1986, p. 98) and Ciriza (2009, pp. 12-3) contend that regionally marked features like LVA are more susceptible to levelling, although their salience in a speech community may aid in their maintenance. Similarly, Haddican (2007, p. 699) draws on the emblematicity of forms as indexically local to argue that attitudes that attribute greater solidarity values to the vernacular contribute to the consolidation of a particular local form and to resistance to attrition.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research overview

I conducted an apparent-time study through informal, semi-structured sociolinguistic interviews in pairs followed by an attitude survey in order to collect data on the occurrence of LVA in Lezama and on the attitudes of locals towards the town's vernacular. The participants of the study were 20 born-Lezamans divided into four groups according to age (16-21 and 47-55) and gender (male and female). A random 10-minute-long section of each interview was recorded for later transcription. In the end, the corpus contained 1540 tokens of the variable in the context of a singular definite article.

3.1.1. The linguistic variable

As specified in §1.4, the variable under analysis is LVA, the process whereby /a/ raises to [e] when preceded by a high (semi)vowel. To narrow down the research focus, I only considered the environment observed to be most likely to undergo LVA cross-dialectally: the definite article in the singular (De Rijk, 1970; Gaminde, 2007; Hualde, 1991; 2003). The possible outcomes are two: non-local, standard [a] and local, non-standard [e]. Examples from my

grammarians have only mentioned these realisations as part of the vocalism of certain areas, not the entire Western Basque territory.

[20] Labov (1994, p. 344; 2001, p. 27) cautions that the focus of attention is not necessarily on the collapse of contrasts, but on the pronunciation of individual merged sounds or words.

data include: *herria* [eria] vs *herrie* [erie] ‘the town’, and *iluna* [iʎuna] vs *ilune* [iʎune] ‘(the) dark’. The salience of the local variant enabled me to pay closer attention to sociolinguistic aspects while also allowing for explanations of linguistic constraints, which have variously been reported to influence the domains of rule applicability (Mather, 2012, pp. 339-40). Precisely, I looked into the possible effects of the trigger segments /i, i̯, u, u̯/ on the realisation of assimilation in the target vowel.

3.1.2. Social variables

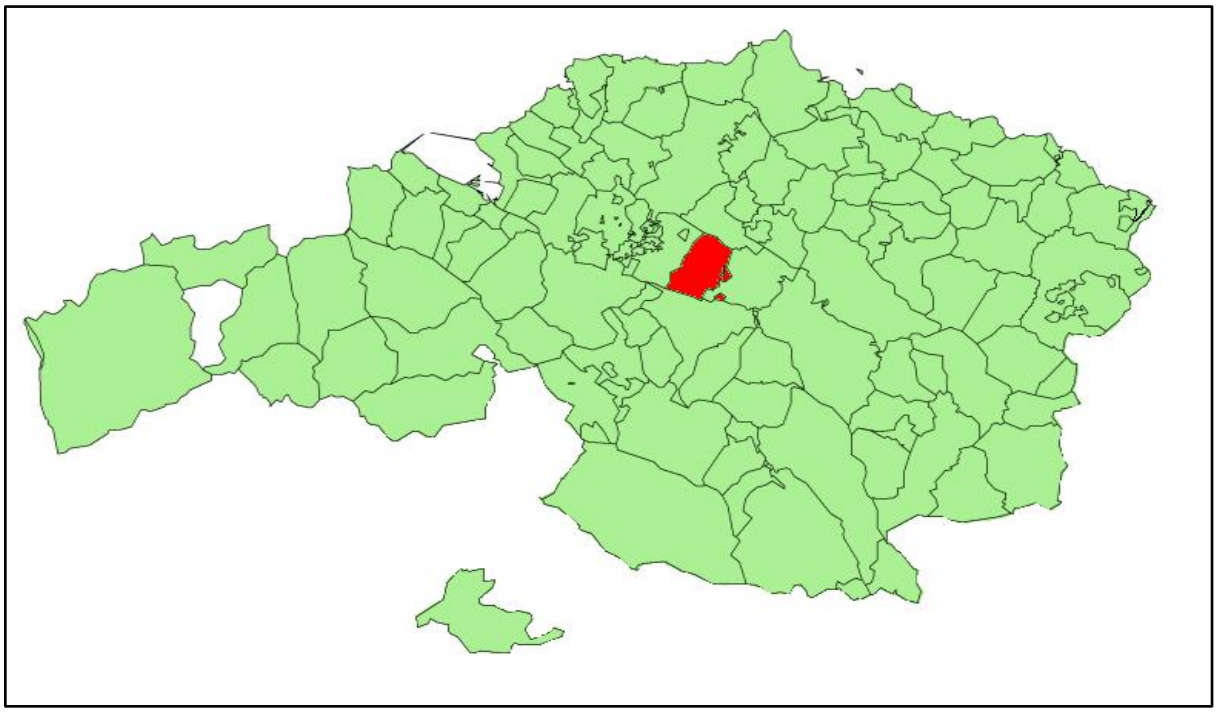
The social variables investigated are age and gender. Following Labov (1994, p. 112), intergenerational language transmission underlies the phenomenon of change; and gender-based language differences have been shown to influence its directionality (see Eckert, 1989b; Esunza, 2016; Zubilaga & Gaminde, 2010). I analysed the speech of 10 young speakers (5 male, 5 female) and 10 adult speakers (5 male, 5 female). Social class is missing from the selection, as, in accordance with Kerswill (1994, p. 51), social stratification has yielded non-significant results in the type of rural areas studied here. In addition, socioeconomic research (e.g. Ponce, 2018, pp. 48-50) has shown low rates of (intergenerational) social mobility in Basque-speaking areas.

3.2. Sample population

3.2.1. The town: Lezama

My study was conducted in Lezama, a semi-rural town with 2,353 inhabitants located near the westernmost limit of the Western Basque dialect area. Lezama lies on the south-eastern end of the Asua river valley in the Txorierri county. Mount Artxanda separates it from Bilbao (12 km away), the capital city of Biscay and largest city in the Basque Country, with over 340,000 inhabitants. Access to Bilbao is either through the largest highway in the BAC (8-10 minutes) or through frequent public transport (15 minutes by bus, 20-25 minutes by train). Map 3.1 shows, highlighted in red, the location of Lezama in Biscay.

Map 3.1. Location of Lezama in Biscay



According to Fullaondo Barrutia (2002, pp. 4-5), 71% of the total population in Lezama are Basque-Spanish bilinguals. The remaining 9-18% of the population is reported to be passive bilingual (Zubiria-Kamino, 2017). Street use of Basque is the second-highest in the county (38%), with neighbouring Larrabetzu (to the east) at 58%. Lezama has a few local businesses, two frontons (two-walled courts used for traditional Basque *pilota*), and some local taverns. The local primary school is of modest size, with approximately 150 students aged 2-12. The Lezama school is a D-model-only school that used Western Basque teaching methodologies until 2018[21]. For secondary education, Lezamans tend to attend the nearest highschool in Derio, located two towns away, or one of the private schools around Bilbao and on the other end of the Txorierri valley (where instruction is in SB).

According to *Auñamendi Eusko Entziklopedia*, Lezama underwent a drastic transformation towards the end of the 20th century. The population remained highly agrarian in 1972, with over 180 farming complexes. Before the 1980s, the train to Bilbao did not reach the centre of Lezama, where it the last stop of the trainline currently is; instead, the previous stop was located in the outskirts of the town, where some factories that mostly employed people from Bilbao had newly been built. This, together with the fact that the journey was

[21] As Maia (2001, p. 251) says, schools that choose to teach in Western Basque usually do not have a standardised model to follow nor much institutional support. This has led many schools, like in Lezama, to adopting SB.

considerably longer and more irregular than it now is, protected the town larger immigration waves from Spain, unlike the areas on the other end of the valley. The renovation of the train and the urbanisation plan launched in the early 1990s attracted a non-negligible amount of incoming population, with 1,614 inhabitants in 1970, 2,020 in 1990, and 2,353 in 2020 (National Institute of Statistics, 2020).

3.2.2. Speakers: *lezamarrak*

In accordance with sociolinguistic trends (Schilling, 2013; Tagliamonte, 2006), a stratified random sampling was applied for the selection of participants, which consisted in identifying possible relevant social factors in advance and selecting the speaker sample accordingly. To avoid interference from non-Lezaman features other than SB, 20 speakers were selected that 1) had acquired Basque as their L1, 2) had been born in Lezama, 3) had not lived outside the town, 4) had Lezaman parents, or alternatively, from neighbouring towns Larrabetzu and Zamudio[22], 5) spoke Basque frequently at least with their interview peer, and 6) were from southern districts of the town[23]. All young speakers were schooled in Basque-medium education (D model)[24] whereas adults only had access to Spanish-medium education; and as explained in §3.1.2, the investigated variables were age and gender. Table 3.1 summarises the four speaker groups and the coding of each speaker according to these factors.

Speakers were relatively easy to reach because I was part of the community, having lived there since birth for over two decades. The first participants in each group were contacted personally, and the rest were found through the "snowball" technique (L. Milroy & Gordon, 2003, p. 2), in which I asked the speakers if they knew other speakers that might be willing to participate in my research. The sample represented the larger population of 2,353 inhabitants with an index of 0.85%, a percentage substantially higher than what Labov (1966, pp. 170-1) recommends for representativeness (0.025%).

As an indication of which networks dominate Basque-language practices in Lezama, it should be noted that all of the speakers in the present study knew each other fairly well and had daily/weekly contact, primarily in Basque. Some were close friends (as is the case with

[22] Zuazo and Goiri (2016, pp. 21) observe that Lezama, Larrabetzu, and Zamudio participate in the same linguistic processes, especially when it comes to LVA.

[23] In his monograph of Zamudio Basque, Gaminde (2000, p. 10) observes divergent patterns in northern districts of Zamudio, which seem to have been influenced by the speech of neighbouring towns to the north. For the purpose of data comparability, it is reasonable to exclude from this study speakers from what is popularly known as *Goikobarrio* 'Upper district' in Lezama.

[24] All young speakers attended the Lezama school except for YM4, who has always studied at another school that teaches in SB.

YF2, YM1, YM2, and YM3; YF4 and YF5; YM4 and YM5; AM2 and AM3; and AF1 and AF2), siblings (YM3 and YM4, AF4 and AF5, and AM4 and AM5), or parent-child (AF1-YM5, AF2-YF1, and AF4-YM3 and -YM4). This suggests that the Basque-speaking community in Lezama is a close-knit community of the dense and multiplex type. However, the increased viability of transportation and proximity to Bilbao has diversified the social structure of Lezama in recent years, as younger generations have considerably more contact with other areas (including heavily Basque-dominant areas to which adults had limited access).

Table 3.1. Speaker groups

Age	*Gender*	*Basque-schooled*	*Code*
20	Female	Yes	YF1
21	Female	Yes	YF2
20	Female	Yes	YF3
17	Female	Yes	YF4
16	Female	Yes	YF5
21	Male	Yes	YM1
21	Male	Yes	YM2
21	Male	Yes	YM3
17	Male	Yes	YM4
17	Male	Yes	YM5
55	Female	No	AF1
54	Female	No	AF2
55	Female	No	AF3
50	Female	No	AF4
55	Female	No	AF5

52	Male	No	AM1
55	Male	No	AM2
55	Male	No	AM3
53	Male	No	AM4
47	Male	No	AM5

3.3. Material

Speech material was collected for a description of the occurrence of LVA in "real language in use" (J. Milroy, 1992, p. 66) in Lezama using video- and audio-recording equipment (Canon EOS 70D). The recordings were made in the December 2019/January 2020 period, although two data collection sessions were carried out in March 2020. My corpus is composed of a total of 1540 tokens of LVA in definite articles, and approximately 4 hours of what Sankoff (1980, p. 54) calls "everyday speech", divided into 12 interviews of roughly 20 minutes each. A random sample of 10 minutes of each interview, chosen from the last 15 minutes of the interview, was manually transcribed and compiled onto the linguistic annotator ELAN (Sloetjes & Wittenburg, 2019).

The data is based on auditory transcription due to the acoustic distinctiveness of the two variants under analysis. Following Woods (1997, p. 101), the data was analysed twice separately by me, once in March and once more in April 2020, to avoid intra-rater variability. All intelligible words containing a singular definite article /a/ preceded by a high vowel were transcribed in the same way on both occasions. All words that might have met the conditions but were unintelligible (due to stuttering, overlapping or sudden background noise) were excluded from the analysis.

3.4. The interviews

In order to elicit spontaneous speech, I used informal, semi-structured sociolinguistic interviews where I gave interviewees some cues for discussion, generally about the town, what makes it distinctive, its development, and positive and negative aspects of living there (Appendix A). The interviews were conducted in Basque, and participants were encouraged

to speak as they felt most comfortable[25]. Speakers coded 1 of each particular age/gender group (see Table 3.1 above) were first interviewed alongside speakers coded 2, and after a break, speaker 1 would again have another interview with speakers coded 3. This was usually done on the same day with the exception of young females. Speakers 4 and 5 of each group would have one separate interview together.

As noted, interviews ran for 20 minutes on average, of which the first served to help the speakers relax and forget about the presence of a recorder, which was usually placed on one side of the room at which the speakers were not looking. The interviews took place in various locations that ensured speakers' comfort: two on the porch of my house, where speakers had already been; one in two speakers' parents' house; another one in the Lezama youth club; and the rest in the speakers' house, where other people would go back and forth and make transient contributions to the conversation. It should be borne in mind that, as mentioned above, many participants were relatives; thus, in many cases, some grew curious as to what their incoming interview would be like and were welcomed to join in.

3.5. The surveys

Following the interviews, speakers filled in an attitude and language use survey that contained items on a Likert scale, from 1, *erabat desados* 'strongly disagree', to 5, *erabat ados* 'strongly agree' (Appendix B). Speakers coded 1 were given the survey only when they had completed their second interview. The items assessed solidarity values towards the town and its Basque, and were scattered amongst other items that gave insight into their perceptions of frequency of own Basque use. The six items that measured solidarity were: 'Lezama is a pleasant town to live in', 'I am proud of being from Lezama', 'I am happy to be from Lezama', 'I would stay in Lezama' (young only), 'I like living in Lezama' (adult only), 'It is important that Lezama school teaches in Lezama Basque', and 'It is important that Lezamans speak Lezama Basque'. The decision to include these was based on the *ProCasEus* project (Elordieta & Romera, in press).

[25] This did not seem to be a problem, as most speakers were used to talking to me in VB and did not hesitate to speak freely. My perception was that most of them forgot about the interview immediately. One example of that comes from AF4, who apologised for having forgotten about my presence (*Ai, parkatu! Itxi dotsugu apurtxu bet aparteta, eh*).

3.6. Procedure

Speakers were contacted under the premise of participating in an anthropological-linguistic atlas of local attitudes and beliefs, or quite literally, *lezamarrok beste lezamarrei buruz pentsetan dogunaz da Lezama berataz be pentsetan dogunaz* 'about what we Lezamans think about other Lezamans and also about the town'. This, I feel, eased some of the tensions that the young speakers that knew me more personally had, as they were more or less familiar with my research interests. My premise, however, enabled them to think in advance of some interesting stories about Lezama that may prove fundamental in future research into sociolinguistic attitudes.

During the interview, speakers were given topics relating to the town for discussion, but they were also encouraged to talk about topics of their choice. This was particularly fruitful because it led to greater interaction. The post-interview survey was carried out individually in separate rooms, and the surveys were written in a way that resembled a formalised version of the Western Basque taught in Lezama school. This was modelled on textbooks that the teachers from Lezama school kindly provided. It did not seem to be a problem for the speakers who had not been schooled in Western Basque or in Basque altogether, since the SB spelling to which young speakers are accustomed (only YM4 did not attend Lezama school) and the Spanish spelling in which the adult speakers were alphabetised follow similar conventions.

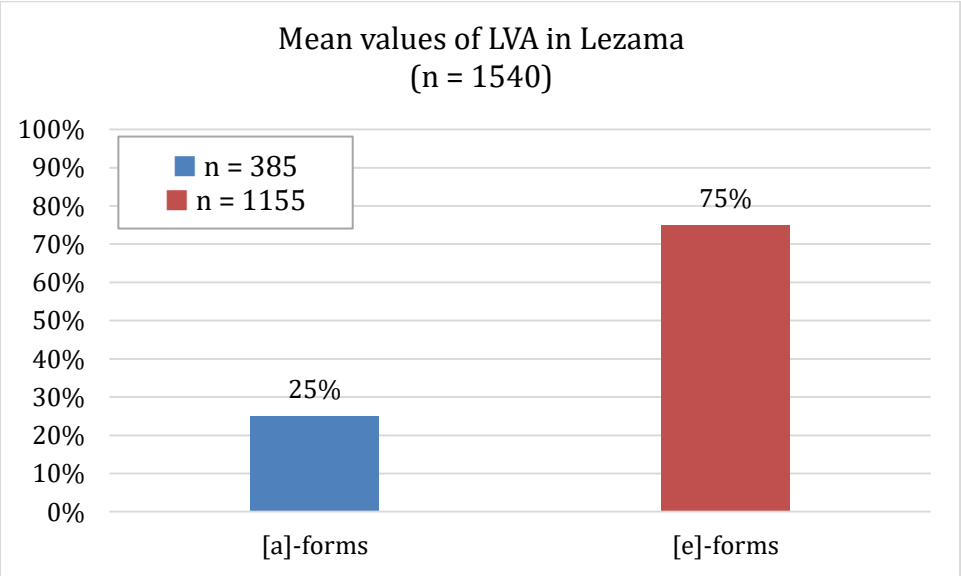
4. Results

§4 explains the collected data based on three aspects: the use rates of LVA by each speaker in the groups (§4.1), the trends of use in each group (§4.2), and the relationship between this use and the attitudes towards the group and its language (§4.3). These three aspects will help clarify the three RQs specified in §1.5.

4.1. LVA in Lezama

As Figure 4.1 shows, the study of all the tokens reveals general tendencies towards local [e]-variants in blue, which occur in three out of four realisations (75%); the remaining 25% represents [a]-forms in blue.

Figure 4.1. Overall rates of local vs non-local forms in Lezama



The data indicates that, in LB on average, the presence of LVA is higher than the absence thereof. However, before assessing social patterns of variation of LVA, it is important to investigate whether LVA is linguistically conditioned, for instance, by the backness of the (semi)vowels that trigger the phenomenon: /i, i̯/ and /u, u̯/ (as Gaminde (2000, p. 191; 2006, pp. 51-2) and Zuloaga (2017, p. 173) suggest). The mean and standard deviation of the percentages of LVA applicability after /i, i̯/ and /u, u̯/ are calculated. Table 4.1 details the mean and standard deviation values of each variant by group and by environment (following /i, i̯/ and /u, u̯/).

Table 4.1. Linguistic conditioning of LVA by speaker group: mean (standard deviation)

	Speaker groups			
Environment	AF	AM	YF	YM
ia > ia	5.99 (2.6)	11.95 (4.21)	14.54 (10.9)	12.85 (10.77)
ua > ua	5.79 (2.84)	15.1 (6.2)	13.98 (7.96)	12.82 (9.57)
ia > ie	43.96 (3.98)	36.85 (5.94)	38.41 (14.07)	37.02 (10.62)
ua > ue	44.28 (3.97)	36.11 (4.51)	33.07 (11.41)	37.35(9.97)

Table 4.2. Linguistic conditioning of LVA by age: mean (standard deviation)

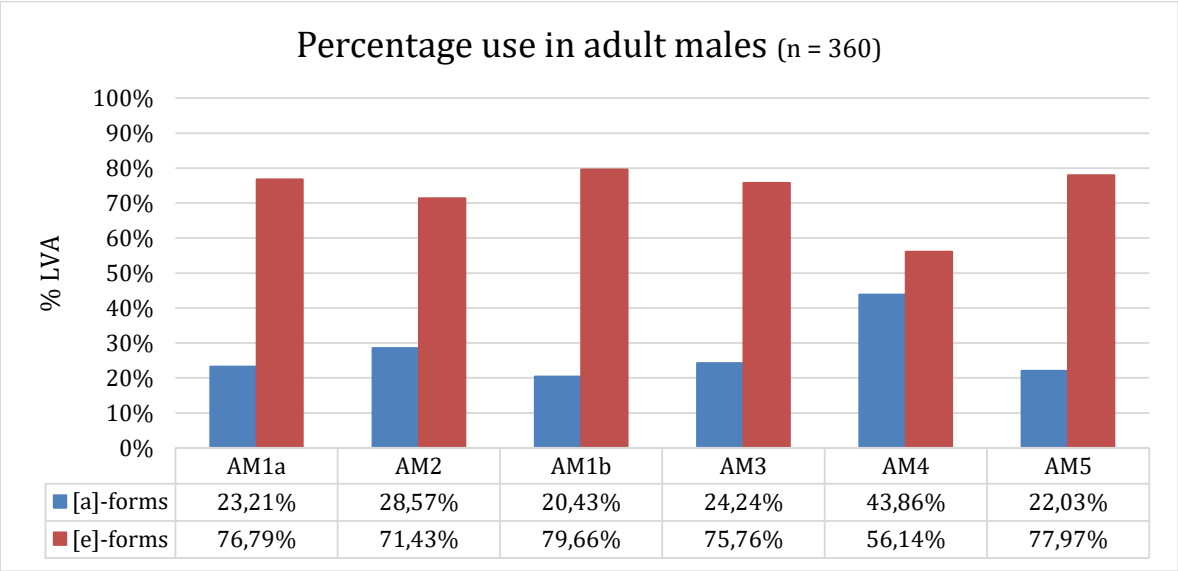
	Age groups		
Environment	Young	Adult	p-value
ia > ia	13.69 (10.37)	8.97 (4.56)	0.477
ua > ua	13.39 (8.41)	10.44 (6.69)	0.351
ia > ie	37.71 (11.9)	40.41 (6.08)	0.551
ua > ue	35.21 (10.46)	40.19 (5.88)	0.427

Table 4.3. Linguistic conditioning of LVA by gender: mean (standard deviation)

	Gender groups		
Environment	Female	Male	p-value
ia > ia	10.26 (8.77)	12.4 (7.81)	0.272
ua > ua	9.88 (7.12)	13.96 (7.78)	0.184
ia > ie	41.19 (10.27)	36.93 (8.2)	0.322
ua > ue	38.67 (10.03)	36.72 (7.41)	0.395

Based on the p-values of each social variable (significant at .005), Tables 4.2 and 4.3 break down the linguistic conditioning of LVA by age and gender respectively. No significant linguistically-conditioned preference for the applicability of LVA emerges in any of the groups, age or gender. Because the data above shows no linguistic conditioning on LVA concerning the backness of the trigger (semi)vowel, only the overall results of the occurrences of each variant will be given without reference to the preceding (semi)vowel. Figures 4.2 through 4.5 outline the percentage use of the two variants by speaker in the adult male, adult female, young male, and young female groups respectively. The left-hand blue bars represent supra-local [a]-forms and the right-hand red bars correspond to local [e]-forms.

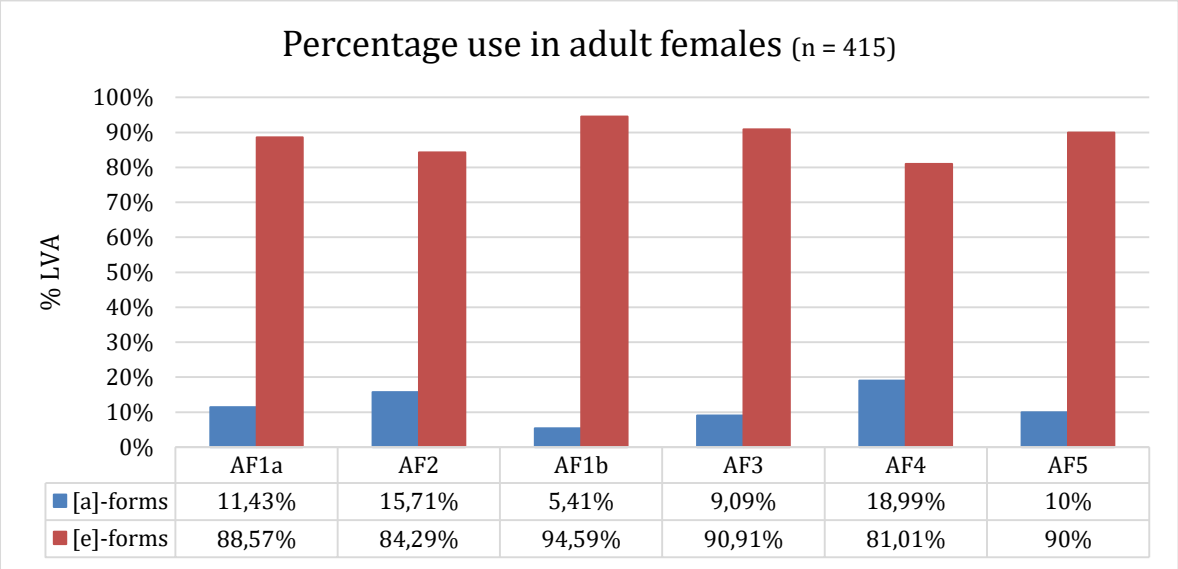
Figure 4.2. LVA by speaker (adult males)



	AM1a	AM2	AM1b	AM3	AM4	AM5
[a]-forms	23,21%	28,57%	20,43%	24,24%	43,86%	22,03%
[e]-forms	76,79%	71,43%	79,66%	75,76%	56,14%	77,97%

According to Figure 4.2, AM1 shows an increase in his use of local variants in his second interview, coinciding with the upward difference in the use of his interlocutors. Further, in the case of adult females, as can be seen from Figure 4.3 below, the use of LVA is high in all speakers. The increase in AF1's use of the local form in her second interview is accompanied by an increase in her interlocutor's LVA use too.

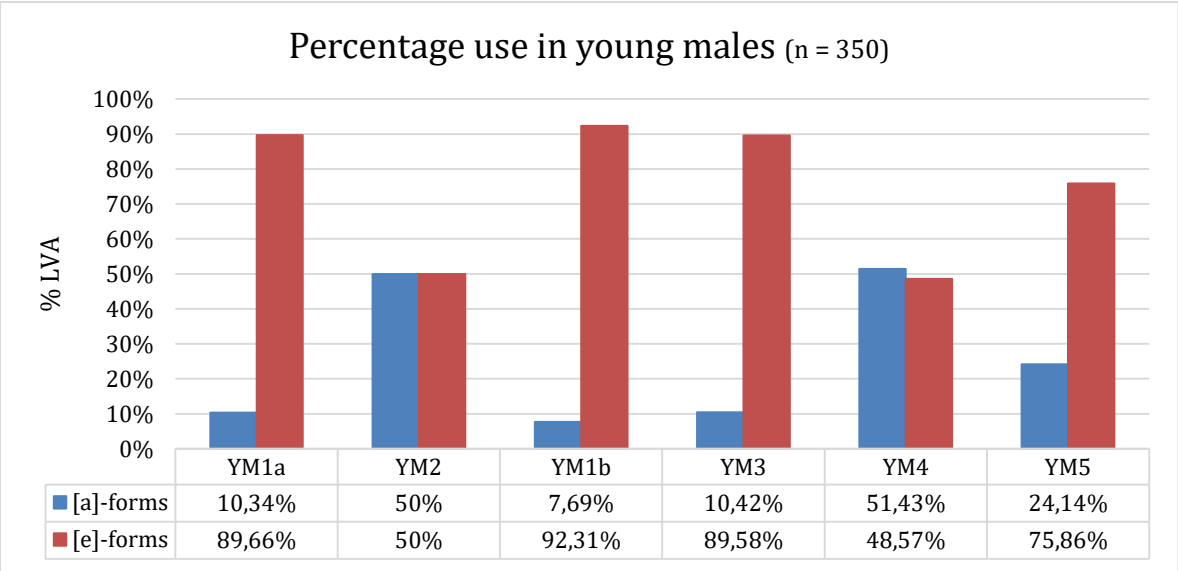
Figure 4.3. LVA by speaker (adult females)



	AF1a	AF2	AF1b	AF3	AF4	AF5
[a]-forms	11,43%	15,71%	5,41%	9,09%	18,99%	10%
[e]-forms	88,57%	84,29%	94,59%	90,91%	81,01%	90%

Use rates of young males are displayed in Figure 4.4. Here the distribution of young males is less uniform than the adult groups. Similarly to the other groups, YM1 increases his use of local variants as his second interlocutor uses more [e]-forms.

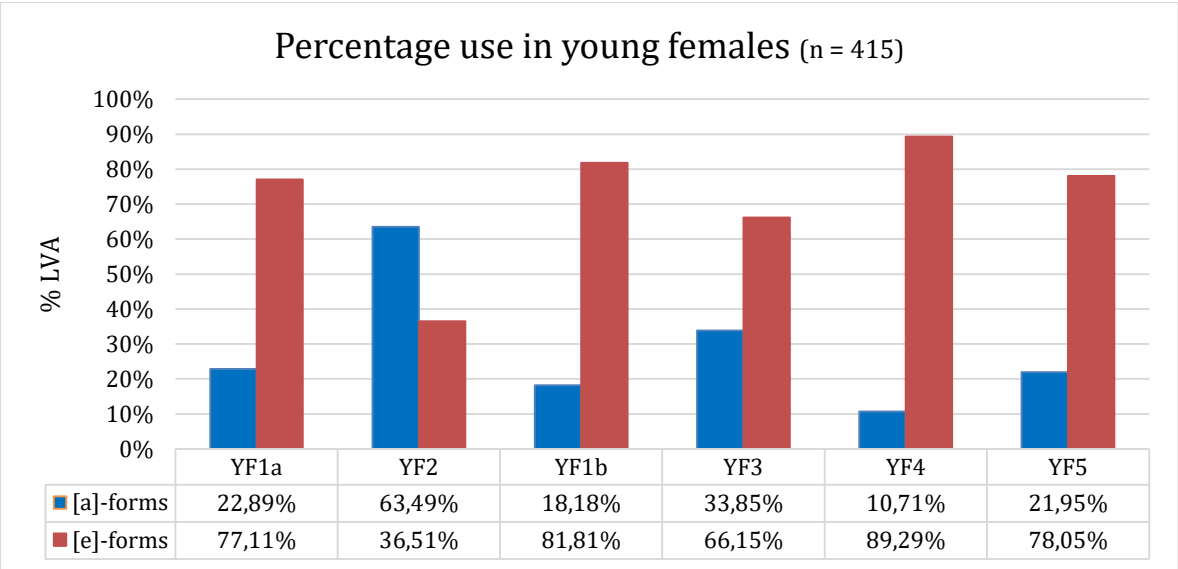
Figure 4.4. LVA by speaker (young males)



	YM1a	YM2	YM1b	YM3	YM4	YM5
[a]-forms	10,34%	50%	7,69%	10,42%	51,43%	24,14%
[e]-forms	89,66%	50%	92,31%	89,58%	48,57%	75,86%

Additionally, percentage use rates of young females can be seen in Figure 4.5, which also reports visible individual differences from one speaker to another. YF1, too, displays an increase in quantitative tokens of [e] in her second interview alongside YF3, who scores higher than YF2.

Figure 4.5. LVA by speaker (young females)

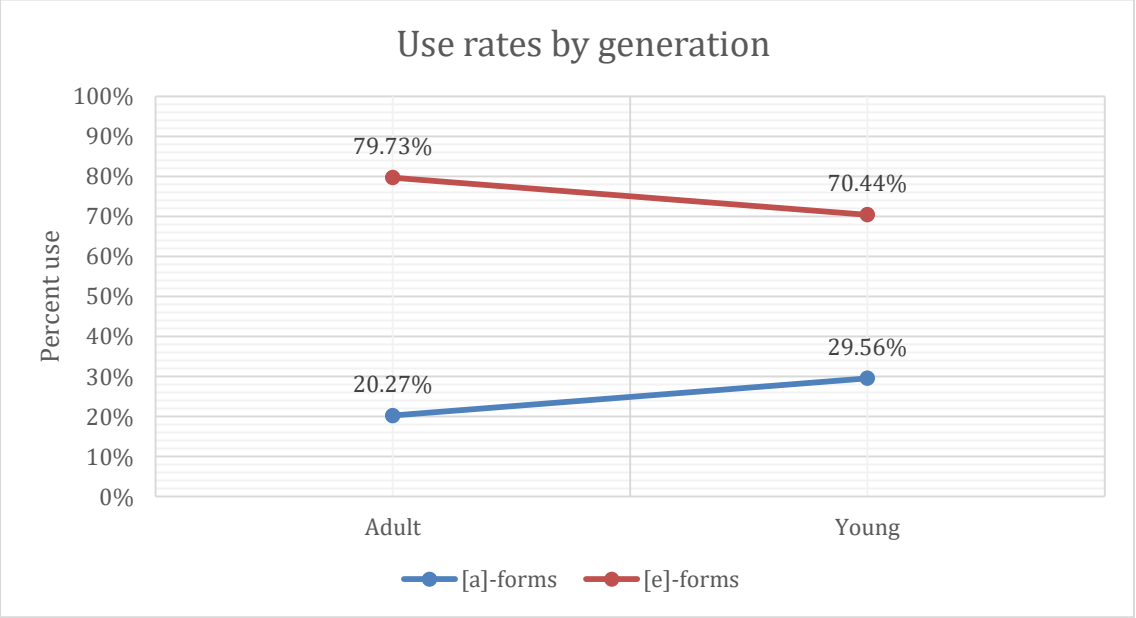


	YF1a	YF2	YF1b	YF3	YF4	YF5
[a]-forms	22,89%	63,49%	18,18%	33,85%	10,71%	21,95%
[e]-forms	77,11%	36,51%	81,81%	66,15%	89,29%	78,05%

4.2. Group differences

Figure 4.6 shows the use rates of local and non-local variants by generation. The red line represents local [e]-forms and the blue line non-local [a]-forms. The adult groups score higher on average than younger groups. There is a 9.29 point transition from one age group to the other that signifies an overall retreat from the local variant. However, such analysis may obscure the complexities in the directionality of intergenerational language change that is occurring in LB.

Figure 4.6. Use rates by age



As reflected in Figure 4.7 and Table 4.4, adult female score is the highest amongst all speaker groups, contrasting strikingly with adult males. Young female use decreases non-significantly by 17.67 points and young males remain relatively stable with a non-significant 0.90 point decline. The p-values (significant at .05) correspond to the age differences as a function of local variant use. The relative reversal of gender-related patterns in the younger generation is shown by lower LVA score in young females in comparison to their age peers. Nevertheless, the great degree of variability within each speaker group needs to be considered too: for example, if YM2 is excluded from the analysis, young females' mean value increases to 78.48%.

Figure 4.7. LVA by age and gender

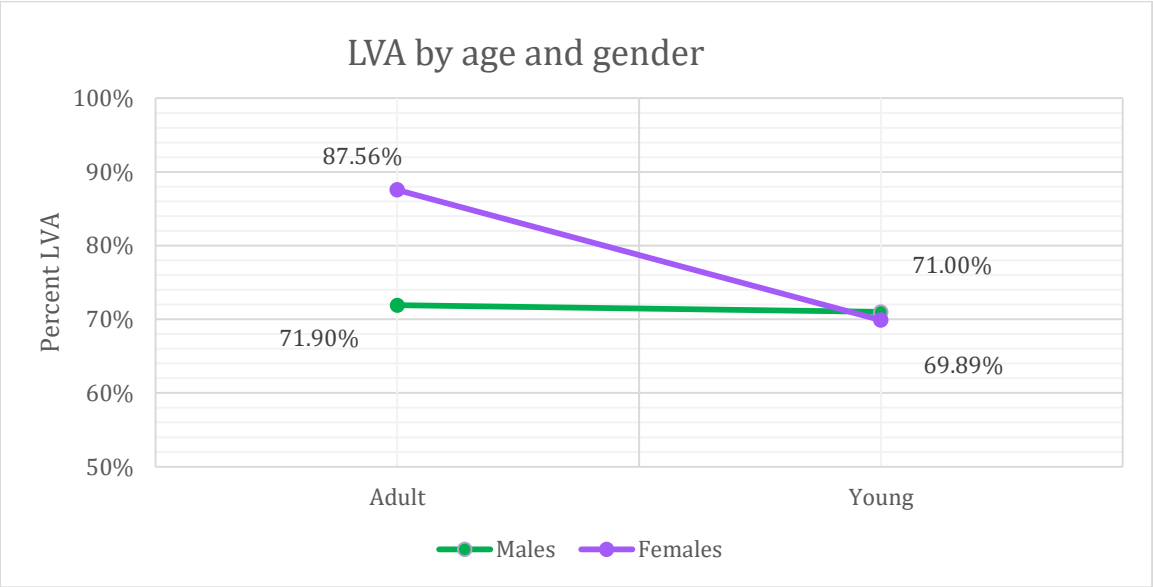


Table 4.4. Coefficients of LVA by age and gender: mean (standard deviation)

	Adult	Young	p-value[26]
Females	87.56 (4.66)	69.89 (20.39)	0.066
Males	71.90 (9.22)	71.00 (20.69)	1

[26] Wilcoxon sign-ranked tests were used to obtain the p-values because the difference between the means of the samples could not be assumed to be normally distributed.

4.3. Attitudes and solidarity

The solidarity values, which indicate the degree of orientation of each speaker towards the community and its variety, are calculated using the responses to the survey questions (Appendix B). Consistent with the item grading, the lowest score is 1 while the highest is 5. Individual solidarity values by speaker are shown in Figure 4.8, and group values are displayed in Table 4.5.

Figure 4.8. Solidarity values by speaker

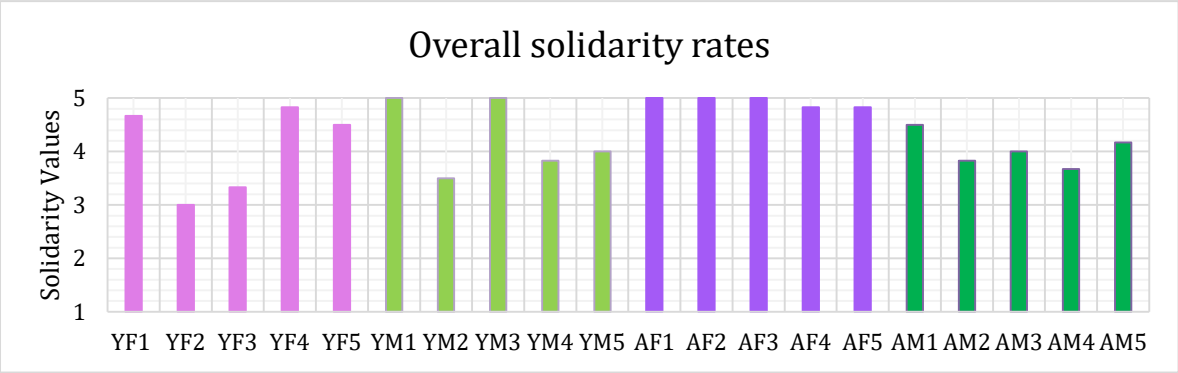
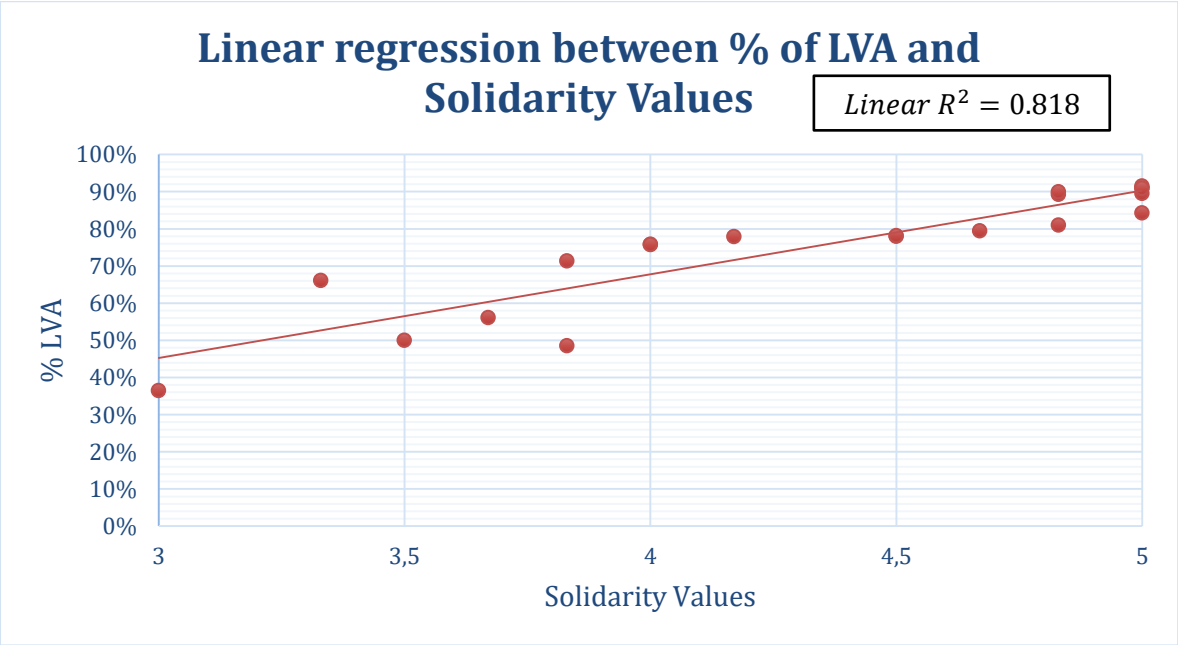


Table 4.5. Solidarity values by speaker group: mean (standard deviation)

	Adult	Young
Females	4.94 (0.08)	4.07 (0.75)
Males	4.03 (0.29)	4.27 (0.62)

The higher standard deviation scores for both young groups suggest a higher variability in positive attitudes towards the community and its language, whereas adult groups are more uniform. Due to this variability, scores are considered individually. The scatterplot in Figure 4.9 shows the degree to which solidarity values assigned to the town and its vernacular may better explain the occurrence of local forms by each speaker. A linear regression analysis indicates that the correlation between these two variables is high (R^2 = 0.818) and shows an upward trend: the higher the solidarity value, the more likely the speaker is to produce local forms.

Figure 4.9. Linear regression between percentage use of LVA and solidarity values



5. Discussion

5.1. LVA across generations and gender in Lezama

Preliminary comparisons of the use of LVA in the two generations indicate a retreat from local forms in younger speakers that would lend itself to the hypothesis of RDL. Adult speakers appear to be more conservative in their use of the traditional, local variant whereas young speakers are more advanced in their use of non-local innovations. If it is the case that LVA has become less frequent in the course of one generation (Figure 4.6), it follows that the young generation is leading the change towards supra-localisation. This distribution would confirm general findings on variation across generations (Eckert, 1988; 1989a; 1997). However, as suggested by Clarke (1982, p. 102), Ensunza (2016, p. 88), and Haddican (2007, p. 693), potential overlapping of intergenerational language change with gender-correlated patterns may reveal the intricacies of variation in LB.

5.1.1. Adult speakers: female conservatism and male innovation

The pronounced gender difference in the adult groups shown in Figure 4.7 becomes blurred in the younger generation. The higher proportion of non-local forms in adult females may be accounted for as an orientation not to the norms in force outside the community but to the

prestige of the local vernacular, which represents the authenticity associated both with rural life and traditional femininity. Indeed, in the past Basque females contributed to the revitalisation and perpetuation of the language, as males' outward tendencies led to dialect contact as well as Spanish and/or French interference (Altuna Ramírez, 2016, p. 41; Del Valle, 1985, p. 61; Mendizabal, 1990, p. 59). In addition, as Acosta (2013) explains, Basque females were held responsible for the future of Basque, especially before the 1968 standardisation of Basque.

This responsibility, and blaming sometimes (Del Valle, 1985, p. 61), correlates with the confinement of females to local spheres in the early-to-mid 20th century (Ibáñez, Ortega, Santana, & Zabala, 1994, p. 145; Muñoz, 2019, p. 7). This ties in with the marginalisation mentioned in §2.3.2, since females were more isolated from external influences and developed a greater degree of attachment in a context in which the local was statusful (see §5.2.1). Therefore, if only adult use is considered, the Lezama data seems to present a case that rejects the claim that females lead in the diffusion of supra-local features (J. Milroy, L. Milroy, Hartley, & Walshaw, 1994, p. 329).

5.1.2. Young speakers: female supra-local trends and male retention of the local

If, on the contrary, young data is included, females show a rapid movement away from local forms, probably in response to the advantages of suppressing regionally marked variants. This may have been due to the consolidation of SB through its growing presence in positions of power in between the two generations studied. The unremarkable role of Basque in the workplace in the late 1990s – Basque was required in under 10% of private positions, while English was valued in 57% of vacancies in the BAC (Gardner, 2000, p. 36) – contrasts with Perez-Izaguirre (2018, p. 14), who underscores the importance of Basque as a tool of "upward social mobility" which "marks academic community-belonging". Moreover, as Echeverria (2005, p. 250) suggest, private institutions in the near future may require SB qualifications like the Basque Government does for civil servant positions by mandating applicants to present official language certificates. The shift in prestige associations may have brought about the (marginal) evening out of local use rates in young Lezamans.

Furthermore, young males may now be orienting themselves towards local values because the functionality of talking non-local has changed – unlike adults, they are not engaged in male-exclusive practices that promote supra-local language use. This may have caused the male maintenance of levels of local variants across the two generations, which is

consistent with the general findings that “females are quicker to embrace the external standard variety” (Clarke, 1991, p. 115) and that males deviate more from the linguistic norm “when the deviations are overtly proscribed” (Labov, 2001, p. 367). In the adult generation, when deviations were not overtly proscribed in the absence of wide-ranging normative pressures, males use more non-local forms. This may indicate that, in consideration of the data from the two generations studied here, adult males first initiated the slow change towards non-local variants.

5.2. Access to non-LVA forms: scenarios of dialect mixing

In line with Labov (2001, p. 506), it is important to evaluate the potential scenarios of each speaker group’s access to variant diversity to understand the origin and motivation of the trends mentioned above. One possible explanation of the abandonment of local forms, at least in young females is that SB is the driving force for the change (Gaminde & Romero, 2011; Unamuno & Aurrekoetxea, 2013; Zuazo, 1998). However, this reasoning appears to be partly unreliable given the limited access of the adult Lezamans to SB, as their schooling was entirely in Spanish.

5.2.1. Males moved around, females stayed in

A noteworthy dialect contact situation that may have initiated the drop in local forms in LB results from the gender-specific occupational activities in Lezama after the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). Like many small Basque towns, Lezama was a highly rural community before the transition into democracy in the late 1970s (Toledo Lezeta, 1996, p. 131). Farmers, usually men, gathered in groups to sell their stocks in larger localities like Bilbao, Gernika, and Mungia, where farmers from other Basque-dominant rural areas concentrated for trade (Abad, 2012, p. 251; Bilbao Council, 1970, p. 154; Onaindia, 1987, pp. 22-4; Zuazo, 2000, pp. 58-9). What in essence was a linguistic market led to a climate of dialect contact whose main participants, males from one and two generations before my adult group, exchanged material as well as linguistic goods. Females stayed home on most occasions because of the restrictions on mobility amongst towns (Ibáñez, Ortega, Santana, & Zabala, 1994, p. 146; Muñoz, 2019, p. 7). As a consequence, it seems reasonable to hypothesise that the two competing variants with [a] and [e] were revalued on the basis of supra-localness and that, at least for males, the former started to be assigned overt prestige due to its functionality outside Lezama.

A number of factors might have caused males' preference for the non-local form. Firstly, although LVA was present in various Basque areas and in particular Western Basque, different constraints on the domains of applicability govern the productivity of the rule (De Rijk, 1970, p. 157; Gaminde, 2007, p. 27; Hualde, 1991, p. 77; 2003, p. 45). Therefore, the preferable outcome would have been one that evened out all possible variability to a more regular pattern with [a][27]. And secondly, despite the low literacy amongst the rural Basques both in Basque and Spanish over the 20th century (Garmendia Larrañaga, Zabaleta Imaz, & Murua Cartón, 2018, p. 198), some farmers may have had basic notions of writing which they used for product display and presentation. As Urgell (1985, pp. 99-100) observes, the most widely-accepted orthographic conventions of definite articles promoted <a>-spellings from the 17th century onwards, which may have been influential in the selection of the [a]-forms that male farmers may have brought into Lezama around the mid 20th century[28].

Although these monthly fairs were a substantial gender-specific dialect contact scenario, they were nonetheless not the only one, especially for the sons of these linguistic innovators. Frontons were and, to some extent, still are frequent meeting points for *pilota* enthusiasts, most of whom have traditionally been males (Abrisketa, 2013, p. 89; Fernández-Lasa & Usabiaga, 2019, pp. 129-130). Lezama has a prominent *pilota* school established in the 1970s owing to the popularity of the *pilota* games in the previous decades. Although their dominance has dwindled at the turn of the century in favour of football (Rojo-Labaien, 2017, p. 69), these bi-weekly sports events were held in Lezama in the period 1950-2000. These games, which were organised across today's BAC and which attracted considerable betting activity, mobilised people in and out of towns and enabled dialect contact, whose mechanism is comparable to the one explained above but which now bears directly on the speech of my male adult group.

While adult males' lower levels of LVA in Lezama appear to be the result of contact-induced accommodation, adult females' speech remained more local as feminine interpersonal ties were established with women within the same community and from neighbouring towns where LVA has been reported to have similar rates (Zuazo & Goiri, 2016, pp. 21). Following L. Milroy (2002, p. 161), adult females' strong retention of local variants may have been motivated by the demographic increase in Lezama from the 1970s

[27] Further evidence for this hypothesis is provided by the dialects of North-East Biscay, which tend to delete the definite article altogether so that forms like *herria*, which may be pronounced [eria] or [erie] in areas with LVA variability, are pronounced [eri] or [eri:] (Hualde, 1991, p. 75). This pronounced difference may have prompted deal-seeking farmers to adopt a compromise form that maximised intelligibility.

[28] The tendencies towards spelling pronunciation may have also been at play.

onwards: the insider identification was particularly meaningful at a time where local use was assigned greater solidarity values, after a period of constant male excursions and importation of non-local features. This view is supported by Fernández-Ulloa's (1997, p. 213) findings that Western Basque females attribute higher prestige values to their vernacular than their male peers[29].

5.2.2. Contact foci for present-day Lezamans: from the general to the individual

One may reasonably predict that young females' withdrawal from local variants is due to the exposure to SB. However, the origin of the change is slightly more complicated. All young Lezamans in this study (except for AM4) were schooled in Western Basque, and they only changed to SB in highschool. Nevertheless, earlier access to SB took the form of cartoons. In fact, according to Cenoz (2001, p. 49), over 80% of bilingual children in the BAC watched television in Basque in 2000. Additionally, the media, and more specifically the radio, have been observed to contribute to the diffusion of other Basque vernaculars, particularly amongst females. Del Amo Castro (2019, p. 26) shows that *Euskadi Gaztea* audiences are primarily concentrated in Biscay and Gipuzkoa and that significantly more young females listen to it than males. This means that young female Lezamans are likely to be exposed to the (Central and High Navarrese Basque[30]) vernaculars on the radio (Del Amo Castro, 2019, pp. 20-21; Elordui, 2016, p. 36), which may explain their use rates.

The stability in young male speech is more difficult to justify in that the male youth in Lezama has had nearly as much access to SB as females. There is no reason to believe that local endeavours that reinforce the presence of the town's vernacular have affected young males more than females either. But if possible contact foci are examined individually, interesting patterns emerge. In the young groups, all speakers over 18 are university students (YF1, YF2, YF3, YM1, YM2, and YM3). Lower use rates are found, not coincidentally, in YF2, YF3, and YM2, who are enrolled in faculties exclusive to the Biscay campus at the University of the Basque Country (UBC). In consequence, they may interact with a number of Basque speakers from other regions. Conversely, YF1, YM1, and YM3 either attend the local university in Bilbao or UBC faculties that are also located in Alava and Gipuzkoa, which reduces their chances, as they reported, of speaking Basque[31].

[29] Participants in her study are now aged 45 at least.
[30] *Euskadi Gaztea* is located in Eastern Gipuzkoa, a region where either Central or High Navarrese Basque are spoken.
[31] Recall, as specified in §2.2.1, that the Bilbao area is Spanish-dominant.

Similarly, YM4, who also produces marginally more non-local forms, did not go to Lezama school; he studies at a renowned private school that takes in students from across Biscay. Therefore, unlike YF4, YF5, and YM5, who show remarkably higher local scores, YM4 is more susceptible to dialect mixing. Based on the disperse σ values of each group shown in Table 4.4, these differential patterns within the young generation, which appear to be the result of geographical mobility, suggest that occurrences of LVA are highly sensitive to individual exposure to dialect diversity.

5.3. Interpreting the link between attitudes and levelling

The significantly strong correlation between local use and solidarity values (Figure 4.9) leads to two contrasting interpretations. One explanation is that the tendency of LVA to result in contact-induced supra-localisation may be decelerated by positive attitudes towards the town's vernacular, since generally the speakers who show higher solidarity values use local forms the most. In addition, in line with Ciriza (2009), Haddican (2007), and Trudgill (1986), high solidarity values also seem to halt the levelling of marked features and oppose the generality of claims that assure that RDL is pervasive in localised varieties of Basque. This may be due to the fact that, as Aurrekoetxea (2004; 2006) and Lujanbio Begiristain (2012; 2016) propose, levelling is weaker in (segmental) phonology.

Another view may be that extensive dialect contact has a direct bearing on the values assigned to the ingroup vernacular, especially when it comes to regionally marked variants which speakers are likely to abandon when they come into contact with other dialects. Indeed, the speakers with the lowest solidarity scores in this study, particularly in the young generation, are those who have had substantial dialect contact and, in consequence, may have realised the socioeconomic and academic benefits of accommodating to supra-local forms (see §5.2). The susceptibility of language attitudes to change in dialect contact situations suggests that, despite the non-significant quantitative drop in local forms, RDL is likely to occur in the generations to come because contact with other vernaculars and, above all, SB is becoming more probable.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Answering the Research Questions

I have drawn on the literature on levelling and the sociolinguistics of age, gender, and language attitudes as well as on apparent-time evidence to understand the variability of LVA in Lezama based on three Research Questions. As for Research Question 1 (Is LVA undergoing levelling in Lezama Basque?), I have demonstrated that there is insufficient support for levelling. For a more comprehensive view on the social conditioning of variation that Research Question 2 (What is the social conditioning of the patterns of variation?) aims to determine, however, gender-correlated patterns and language attitudes should be considered. The answer to Research Question 3 (What is the cause of the change?) seems to align with recent accounts on language attitudes and use. My results show a strong correlation between solidarity values and local language use, which may be interpreted as an orientation towards local variants in contact situations or as a detachment from them as a result of contact.

My findings pattern with general observations that non-prescribed linguistic innovations are led by males and prescribed linguistic innovations by females (Labov, 2001, p. 367; Reynolds, 2012, pp. 127-8). More specifically, the sample of Lezamans analysed suggests that, despite adult female conservatism in the use of LVA, the intergenerational decline in young female use of local variants is non-significant and that young males appear to have halted the downward trend to equal adult male levels. Therefore, this distribution only partly supports a hypothesis of levelling in Lezama. This may be due to the phonological nature of the variable under analysis, as the effects of supra-localisation on (segmental) phonology have generally been found to be weaker than in grammar and vocabulary (Aurrekoetxea, 2004; 2006; Lujanbio Begiristain, 2012; 2016).

The association between attitudes and use is in keeping with the general conclusions drawn for the prosodic variation in the Basque Country (Elordieta & Romera, in press; Urtzelai Vicente, 2018), where solidarity values override nativeness and gender as determinants of intonational patterns. The degrees of favourable/unfavourable attitudes towards the ingroup and their language are projected into degrees of use of local/non-local forms. And although situations of dialect mixing are responsible for the slight withdrawal from local variants in adult male speech, the advantages of suppressing local features

(arguably in favour of SB) emerge as the primary motivation of the change for young females.

6.2. Further research

For further research, other domains of applicability of LVA and their effects on the constraints of the rule should be studied taking into account the hierarchy model of the productivity of LVA (De Rijk, 1970; Gaminde, 2007; Hualde, 1991; 2003). It would also be interesting to measure the development of levelling in other Lezaman features like de-palatalisation and (front) mid vowel raising (Gaminde, 2006; Zuazo & Goiti, 2016) in terms of emblematicity. The conclusions drawn from looking at the bigger picture of the changes that may affect the intergenerational transmission of phonology would lend themselves to comparisons with morpho-syntax and lexis, since, as Boberg (2004, p. 266) explains, these would help test the generalisability of the claim that phonology tends to remain less susceptible to language change in adulthood.

Future investigations would need to analyse a wider sample of the population, including older generations and especially the new generations of Lezamans, who would arguably be subjected to heavier supra-local pressures because Lezama school has recently changed the instruction model from Western Basque to SB. Following Gaminde (2000, p. 10), studying speakers from all districts of Lezama would also contribute to gauging the depth of levelling effects across the town, as northern areas have traditionally remained more isolated from central Lezama. Similarly, examinations of possible stylistic shifts in different age groups of speakers aged 40 and below (the population that is more likely to have had contact with SB) would offer valuable considerations of the perceived domains that are reserved to SB as opposed to VB. Another aspect to consider is geographical mobility and the easier access of present generations to transportation and, by extension, potential dialect mixing with other areas.

These factors complicate what until now has been a relatively straightforward selection of "pure" local speakers because, with the arrival of new residents in Lezama and the outward dispersion of locals, it may be envisaged that the town will have remarkable dialect mixing in the coming decades. Likewise, given the correlation between attitudes and language use, future research should focus on the relationship between the production of local variants and evaluations of local speech in relation to the community and on their effects on the resistance to levelling. In line with Urla et al. (2017, p. 39), this would help corroborate

the homeward tendency of assigning positively held values to the speech of one’s town in Basque.

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Appendices

Appendix A (translated)

Questions and cues for discussion (young speakers):

- Some people would rather live in larger cities, others prefer smaller towns. How do you find living in our town?
- Does anything make Lezama stand out amongst other places, villages…?
- What do you like/dislike about Lezama?
- Lezamans often have to face the stereotype that we are too full of ourselves. Have you ever had anyone say that to you? How did you react?
- A lot of people are especially fond of their school days, what was it like for you? And what are the main differences with highschool/university?
- What are your plans after finishing school?

Questions and cues for discussion (adult speakers):

- Some people would rather live in larger cities, others prefer smaller towns. How do you find living in our town?
- Does anything make Lezama stand out amongst other places, villages…?
- What do you like/dislike about Lezama?
- Lezamans often have to face the stereotype that we are too full of ourselves. Have you ever had anyone say that to you? How did you react?
- The Lezama school has had many shapes and forms, and there were even two depending on the time. Which one did you study in?
- When you were younger, what sorts of things did young people do? Was there any special thing to do in Lezama at the weekend back then?

Appendix B (translated)

Attitude and use survey

Name: _____

1. Was your education in Basque? YES / NO

2. If so, please fill in the gaps with '1' if your education was in *bizkaiera* ('Western Basque') and '2' if your education was in *batua* ('Standard Basque'):

Primary school: ___ Post-secondary: ___

Secondary school: ___ Others: ___

Now please indicate how much you agree with the following statements. 1 means you disagree completely and 5 that you agree completely.

3. I speak Basque at home:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				Strongly agree

4. I speak Basque with my friends:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				Strongly agree

5. It is important that Basques speak Basque

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				Strongly agree

6. I speak Basque at school/work:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				Strongly agree

7. Lezama is a pleasant town to live in:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				Strongly agree

8. Lezama is a beautiful place:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				Strongly agree

9. I am happy to be from Lezama:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				Strongly agree

10. Young people should speak Basque more often:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				Strongly agree

11. I should speak Basque more often:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				Strongly agree

12. I am proud to be from Lezama:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				Strongly agree

13. I like speaking Basque:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				Strongly agree

14. It is important that Lezamans speak Lezama Basque:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				Strongly agree

15. It is important that Lezama school teaches in Lezama Basque:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				Strongly agree

16. I would stay in Lezama (young group):

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				Strongly agree

16. I like living in Lezama (adult group):

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				Strongly agree