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1. Bilingualism is on the increase thanks to the education system but, in the latest editions, a slowdown in this increase has been observed

The results for *linguistic communication competence in Basque and Spanish* must be examined from an overall perspective, i.e. from the perspective of the rise or fall in bilingualism in a sociolinguistic context where Basque is a minority language which, despite the significant development and progress achieved in recent decades, still remains in a diglossic and minoritised situation. Furthermore, the situation in the Basque Country is also characterised by the interlinguistic distance between the majority language - Spanish - and the Basque language.

It must be made very clear and highlighted that the benchmark used for the analysis is for all students to achieve level B2 in Basque and in Spanish upon completing their basic education. Therefore, a similar level of competence in Basque for students whose mother tongue or first language (L1) is Basque, but also for students whose first language or home language is Spanish or another language that is not Basque. So this requires a commitment to the Basque language, which is highly demanding in a social context where there are more opportunities to use Spanish.

For the analysis of bilingualism, as a starting point we used the types of bilingualism and the losses and gains made by the Basque Language according to the Sociolinguistic Survey by the Basque Government's Deputy Ministry of Language Policy, with the necessary modifications being made to the Diagnostic Assessment. More specifically, the typology of bilingualism used by us includes the following seven categories, whose main characteristics are summarised in the tables below:

- **Students who are not competent in Basque or Spanish**

There is a significant group of students who are not competent, i.e. who have

failed to progress beyond the initial level¹ in Basque and Spanish, in Primary Education (PE) and in Compulsory Secondary Education (CSE). They make up 8.47% of PE and 10.87% of CSE.

In PE, the highest figure was recorded in the 2009 edition; it gradually fell until 2013 and then rose again in 2017. In CSE, this percentage has remained at around 10% in all editions, albeit with some fluctuations.

- **Monolingual Spanish-speaking students**

This group has passed the initial level in *linguistic competence in Spanish* but not in *Basque*.

In the last two editions, this has been the largest group, both in PE and CSE, being higher in number than the balanced bilingual group, which had the highest number between 2009 and 2013.

In Primary Education, the numbers fell from 19.8% in 2009 to 14.5% in 2010, but since then the percentage has increased, albeit at an increasingly slow rate. In CSE it remained at around 25% between 2009 and 2013; it rose by 9% between 2013 and 2015, and remained at the same level in 2017, with a slight drop of half a percentage point.

- **Monolingual Basque-speaking students**

This group has passed the initial level in *linguistic competence in Basque* but not in *Spanish*.

¹ Progressing beyond the initial performance level on the Diagnostic Assessment scale is considered the minimum threshold required to acquire knowledge and develop competences that will enable or allow the students to successfully complete every stage of basic education and continue their studies.

This has been the smallest group in all editions, both in PE and CSE. It is currently composed of 428 students in PE and 289 in CSE.

In PE, the highest percentage was in 2010, at 7.1%, but it has been at around 2% in almost all editions. In CSE it has also ranged from 2% to 3%.

- **Balanced bilingual students**

This group achieves intermediate level in both official languages.

In PE, it reached almost 25% in 2009 and 2010; it rose in 2013 and then fell in 2015, achieving the same percentage in 2017. In the 2nd year of CSE it was above 25% in 2009; it rose in 2010 and then gradually fell until 2015. It remained at the same level between 2015 and 2017.

- **High-level balanced bilingual students**

This group also has a balanced level in the two official languages but, unlike the previous group, which had an intermediate level in both languages, in this case it achieves an advanced level in both. So this is the highest performing group in both Basque and Spanish.

In PE, the percentage grew between 2009 and 2010 but then fell in 2013; it remained

the same in 2015 and fell slightly in 2017. In CSE, it rose by 3 percent between 2009 and 2010, and then fluctuated up and down until 2017.

- **Bilingual students, predominantly Spanish**

They have an intermediate level in Basque and an advanced level in Spanish.

In PE, this has remained at around 10% in all editions. In CSE the percentages have been a little higher than in PE in every edition.

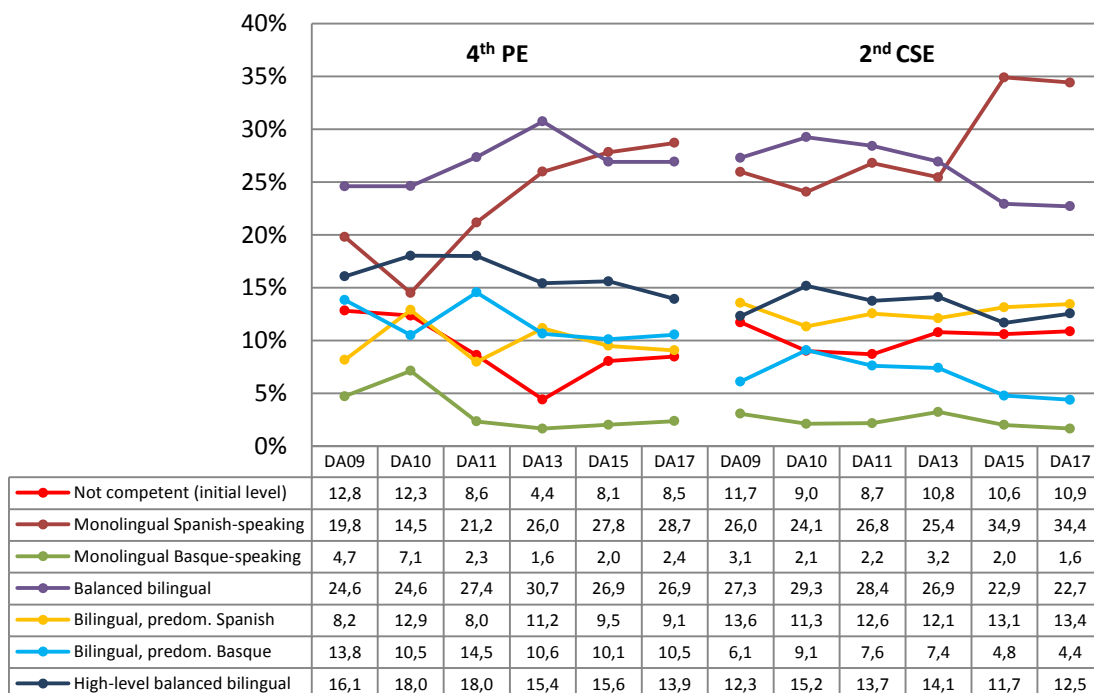
- **Bilingual students, predominantly Basque**

They have an advanced level in Basque and an intermediate level in Spanish.

Unlike in the previous group, the percentage levels in Compulsory Secondary Education have always been below those of Primary Education.

In PE, after falling for a period it rose again; it fell between the 2009 and 2013 editions, since which the percentage has remained at the same level at 10%. However, in CSE, it rose by 3 percent between 2009 and 2010, but then dropped by almost 5 percent up to 2017.

Graph 1.: Evolution of students percentage by type of bilingualism.



There is a strong correlation between the types of bilingualism and certain variables, which in turn also have a significant impact on the results of *scientific* and *mathematical competence* and *linguistic communication competence in English*. Indeed, Economic, Social and Cultural Status (ESCS), suitability (whether students are being taught at a level suitable for their age) and the origin of the students have a major impact on the linguistic competence of students in both official languages:

- Students who are not competent in Basque or Spanish have the lowest level of ESCS and the highest repetition rates and the highest percentage of students of immigrant origin. This group also has the worst results in *linguistic communication in English* and in *mathematical* and *scientific competence*.
- Monolingual Spanish-speaking students have a quite similar profile to the above, but to a lesser degree.

- At the other extreme are high-level balanced bilingual students: they have the highest ESCS level, the lowest repetition rates and the lowest percentage of students of immigrant origin. They achieve the best academic results.
- Between them are the balanced bilingual students, with average values in almost all variables. This is also the case for bilingual students who predominantly speak Spanish, who have a higher ESCS, higher 'suitability' rate and fewer students of immigrant origin, but they also have a lower percentage of students with Basque as their home language.

It is noteworthy that, generally speaking, the characteristics of the seven categories of bilingual students have largely remained unchanged over the years in both PE and CSE, despite the fact that the numbers in each category have varied between 2009 and 2017.

4 th year of PE (DA17)	Individual ESCS	Suitability	Immigrant origin	Basque home language	L1 Basque
Not competent	-0.52	83.4	12.6	26.7	32.7
Monolingual Spanish-speaking	-0.23	89.5	13.1	13.4	21.5
Monolingual Basque-speaking	-0.04	94.4	6.1	56.8	68.7
Balanced bilingual	0.04	95.6	7.5	28.5	43.7
Bilingual, predominantly Spanish	0.27	98.1	7.4	9.7	23.0
Bilingual, predominantly Basque	0.31	99.2	2.9	55.8	72.6
High-level balanced bilingual	0.46	99.4	2.9	32.7	52.0
TOTAL	0.02	93.9	8.4	26.5	39.3

2 nd year of CSE (DA17)	Individual ESCS	Suitability	Immigrant origin	Basque home language	L1 Basque
Not competent	-0.56	62.5	11.6	16.2	30.9
Monolingual Spanish-speaking	-0.14	78.2	10.0	7.9	22.4
Monolingual Basque-speaking	-0.13	88.6	4.2	44.3	63.6
Balanced bilingual	0.13	93.1	4.2	26.9	49.2
Bilingual, predominantly Spanish	0.33	95.5	3.2	11.3	31.2
Bilingual, predominantly Basque	0.32	97.5	0.8	55.2	75.7
High-level balanced bilingual	0.52	98.8	2.2	31.6	55.4
TOTAL	0.05	85.8	6.4	19.2	37.8

1.1. The home language and first language determine the level of bilingualism

The level of bilingualism, i.e. the relative linguistic competence in Basque and Spanish, is heavily influenced by the home language² and the first language (L1)³.

77.6% of monolingual Spanish-speaking students from the 2nd year of CSE have a language other than Basque as their L1; the same occurs with over 2/3 of students who are not competent in Basque or Spanish (69.1%) and also among bilingual students who predominantly speak Spanish (68.8%).

² The Basque home language variable groups together families in which at least one of the parents, the mother or the father, speaks Basque and they talk both Basque and Spanish at home or more Basque than Spanish.

³ L1 is defined as the first language learnt before the age of 3.

The balanced bilingual students and high-level balanced bilingual students with Basque as their L1 are at the same level as students with a language other than Basque as their first language.

Finally, Basque has been the first language of 63.6% of monolingual Basque-speakers and 75.7% of bilingual students who predominantly speak Basque.

The findings are very similar in the 4th year of Primary Education, although certain differences can be observed between balanced bilingual students and high-level balanced bilingual students, of whom those with Basque as their L1 are in the minority.

Furthermore, the Basque home language variable groups together families in which at least one of the parents, the mother or

the father, speaks Basque and they speak as much Basque at home as Spanish, or more Basque than Spanish. The home language figures for each type of bilingualism all point in the same direction: in the 2nd year of CSE, Basque is the home language of 55.2% of bilingual students who predominantly speak Basque, of 44.3% of monolingual Basque-speakers, of 31.6% of

high-level balanced bilingual students and of 26.9% of balanced bilingual students. But it of CSE is only the home language of 16.2% of students who are not competent, 11.3% of bilingual students who predominantly speak Spanish and 7.9% of monolingual Spanish-speaking students.

1.2. The gains made by the Basque language exceed the losses

Cross-referencing the home language variable with the types of bilingualism allows us to evaluate the loss and maintenance of the Basque language and the gains made by the language.

- Losses of the Basque language occur when students with Basque as a home language fail to progress beyond the initial level of Basque (students who are not competent and monolingual Spanish-speakers).
- Maintenance of the Basque language occurs among students who have Basque as their home language and achieve an intermediate or advanced level in that language (monolingual Basque-speaking students, balanced bilingual students, bilingual students who predominantly speak Spanish, bilingual students who predominantly speak Basque, high-level balanced bilingual students).
- The category of gains in the Basque language groups together students who do not have Basque as their home language but achieve an intermediate or advanced level in that language (monolingual Basque-speaking students, balanced bilingual students, bilingual students who predominantly speak Spanish, bilingual students who predominantly speak Basque, high-level balanced bilingual students).
- The remaining students do not have Basque as their home language and

have not passed the initial level of Basque (students who are not competent and monolingual Spanish-speakers).

In short, this analysis allows us to assess the contribution made by the education system to bilingualism, an objective set in Basic Act 10/1982, on the Normalisation of the Use of the Basque Language. Taking as an example the figures from DA 2017 for students in the 2nd year of CSE, we can observe that:

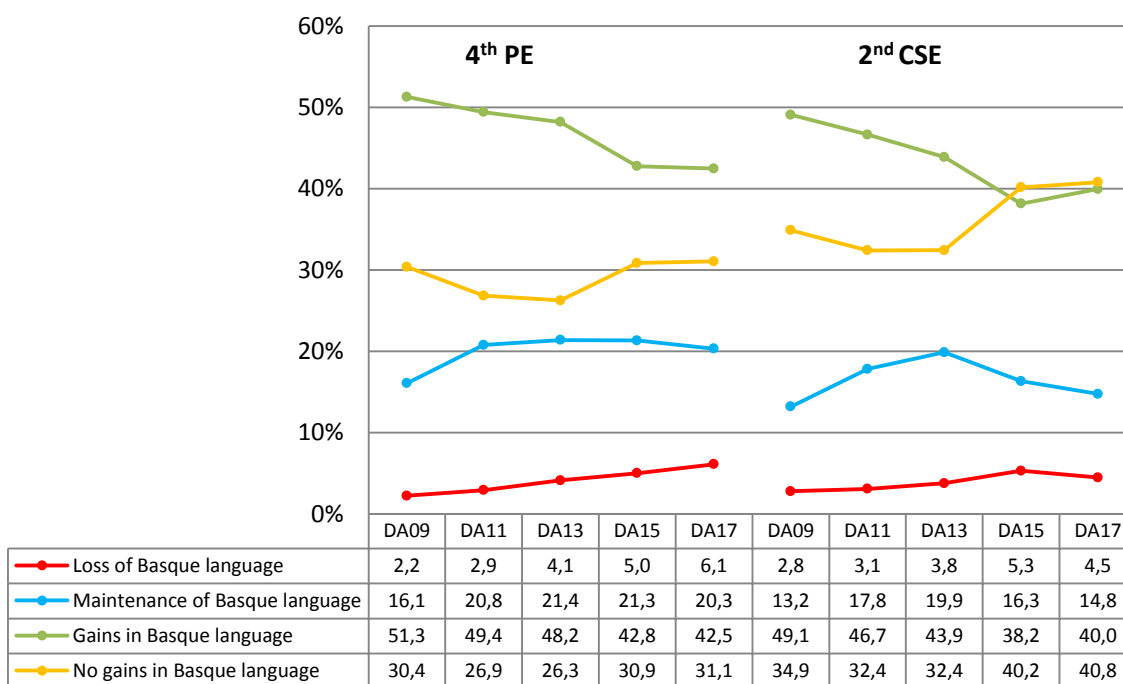
- Fewer than 20% of students have Basque as their home language (around 3,400 people). Therefore, the vast majority (around 14,200 people, 80.8%) do not have Basque as their home language.
- However, almost 9,600 students, i.e. a little over half of the total students (54.7%) have passed the initial level of Basque: three quarters of the students with Basque as their home language and half of the students whose home language is not Basque.
- Therefore, the contribution made to bilingualism by the education system is unquestionable because the number of bilingual students is almost three times the number of students with Basque as their home language.

2 nd CSE (DA17)	Basque home language (total no.)	Basque home language (% group)	Basque not home language (total no.)	Basque not home language (% group)	Total population
Not competent	309	9.2	1595	11.3	1904
Monolingual Spanish-speaking	476	14.1	5555	39.3	6031
Monolingual Basque-speaking	128	3.8	161	1.1	289
Balanced bilingual	1072	31.8	2907	20.5	3979
Bilingual, predominantly Spanish	267	7.9	2088	14.8	2355
Bilingual, predominantly Basque	424	12.6	343	2.4	767
High-level balanced bilingual	696	20.6	1502	10.6	2198
TOTAL	3371	100	14152	100	17523
		19.2		80.8	

That being said, we have repeated these analyses with all of the students from the 4th year of PE and the 2nd year of CSE who were assessed in the Diagnostic

Assessments of 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2017, to gain an in-depth insight into overall trends in the gains and losses of the Basque language.

Graph 1.2. Percentage of students by gains and losses in Basque language.



The graph shows that:

- Gains to the Basque language are the largest category in almost every edition; they currently stand at around 40% in both PE and CSE, but steadily fell between 2009 and 2015 and remained the same in 2017 in PE and increased slightly in CSE.
- Maintenance of the Basque language remains stable at around 20% in PE, while in CSE it rose from 13% to 20% between 2009 and 2013, before increasing to 15% in 2017.
- Losses of the Basque language have increased from 3% to 6% in PE and to 4.5% in CSE.

1.3. The education system alone cannot guarantee bilingualism for all students

Although highly significant, the contribution made by the education system cannot guarantee bilingualism for all students by itself. In fact, new speakers join the Basque education system every year, at all levels, both in PE and in CSE. As the Basque language is in the minority and minoritised in the various sociolinguistic areas of the Basque Country, and given the impact of the first language and home language on the level of bilingualism among its children, it alone cannot guarantee that all students become bilingual. Nor can it ensure that there are no losses among students whose home language is Basque, not even in the D linguistic model.

As we have said above, the students from the seven categories of bilingualism have very disparate characteristics, some of which are linked to the type of school where they are educated.

According to DA17, almost half of the students from the 2nd year of CSE (41.3%) and from PE (47.3%) are educated in the public D stratum. The subsidized private D stratum makes up around 25% of the students in both stages, and the subsidized private B stratum represents 22.1% (2nd year of CSE) and 18.2% (4th year of PE). The subsidized private A stratum covers 5.7% of the population in the 2nd year of CSE and 3.4% in the 4th year of PE. Finally, the strata with the lowest percentages of the school population are the public B stratum (below 4% in both stages) and the public A stratum (2.4% in the 2nd year of CSE and 1.1% in the 4th year of PE).

Based on the premise that students at the initial level of Basque and/or Spanish have failed to achieve the objective of becoming bilingual, a goal set for the system as a whole, the first three categories of bilingualism (students who are not competent in Basque or Spanish, monolingual Spanish-speaking students and monolingual Basque-speaking students) must be seen as an indicator that, by itself, the education system is failing to achieve the goal of bilingualism:

- In CSE, the goal of bilingualism was not achieved in 98.2% of the public A stratum, 77.7% of the public B stratum, 77.6% of the subsidized private A stratum and 57.8% of the subsidized private B stratum. However, the D linguistic model failed to ensure that 43.6% of the public D stratum and 32.5% of the subsidized private D stratum achieved the goal of bilingualism.
- The situation is somewhat better in Primary Education, but the objective of bilingualism was still not achieved in 91.2% of the public A stratum, 66.6% of the subsidized private A stratum and 59.4% of the public B stratum. However, 53.3% of the subsidized private B stratum, 61.5% of the public D stratum and 71.3% of the subsidized private D stratum did achieve the goal.

Since the seven types of bilingualism achieved by the students have such disparate characteristics and, given that the bilingual students are educated in schools from very varied strata, it is necessary to

design tools and measures that will enable

flexible and appropriate responses.

1.4. The overall trend is also repeated in the D linguistic model

The D linguistic model is the backbone of the Basque education system. In the 2nd year of CSE it covers 94% of the public school network and 60% of the subsidized private network and, in the 4th year of PE, 93% and 61% respectively.

The D linguistic model is a Basque language immersion system, but in a sociolinguistic context where, despite making great strides in recent decades, the Basque language continues to be a minority and minoritised language in the Basque Country. In the D linguistic model, achieving a good standard in the classroom language used for teaching and learning is a key and strategic objective to ensure effective learning of the other areas and subjects that make up the compulsory curriculum. This is also a key, essential objective of a linguistic model where a significant proportion of students acquire their knowledge and develop their competences in a language which they do not normally use at home or in their social environment.

We should bear in mind that one of the key variables of a language immersion model, such as the amount of time students are exposed to the classroom language - in our case Basque - cannot easily be changed in the D linguistic model and, therefore, any suggested improvements to resolve the problems that are identified should take a different

form of proposal, relating to methodological and didactic areas, improving the language of the teaching staff or increasing the opportunities to use Basque in non-school environments.

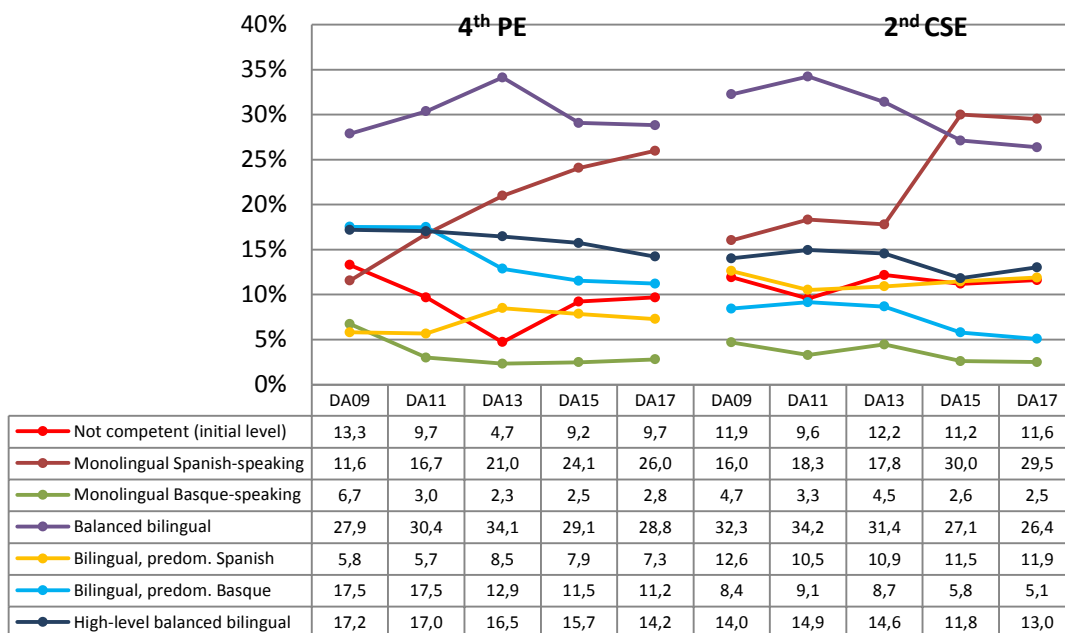
In the nine academic years covered by the six editions of the Diagnostic Assessment, there has been a significant increase in monolingual Spanish-speaking students in the D linguistic model, both in the public and subsidized private strata, rising:

- from 11.6% in 2009 to 26% in 2017 in PE and from 16% to 29.5% in CSE in the public school network.
- from 8.1% to 18% in PE and from 13.5% to 22.2% in CSE in the subsidized private school network.

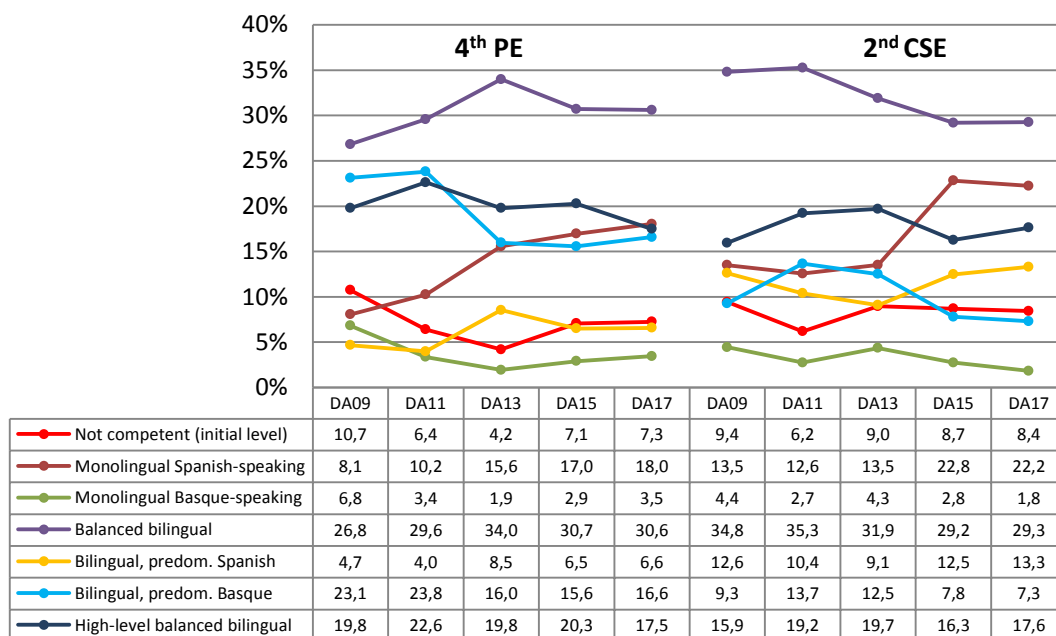
There has also been a fall in the number of bilingual students who predominantly speak Basque, accompanied by a fall in the number of balanced bilingual students in Primary Education, in both educational networks.

Against this backdrop, the increase in the number of students who are competent in Basque and Spanish is noteworthy: it is also worth noting that in PE, the number of balanced bilingual students has remained the same in the public network and increased in the subsidized private network, although in CSE it has decreased by around 6 percent in both networks:

Graph 1.4.a.: Evolution of students percentage according to type of bilingualism, in the D stratum of the public network.



Graph 1.4.b.: Evolution of the students percentage, according to type of bilingualism, in the D stratum of the subsidized private network.



What needs to be assessed is whether, during this time, there have been significant changes to the characteristics of the students being educated in these two strata, which could help us to find reasons for this drop in the average score.

The table below compares the figures for 2009 and 2017 for a number of variables from the public and subsidized private D linguistic model, where the following points can be observed: the presence of these two strata has grown significantly in the

education system; as of 2017 they represent almost 75% of students in the Basque education system, 15 percent higher than in 2009.

Its increased presence in the system means that it now includes a more diverse range of students than a few years ago, creating greater educational complexity, especially in public schools which, for example, have 3% more 'unsuitable' students and double the percentage of immigrant students and students with a low level of ISEC. There have also been certain changes in the subsidized private stratum, albeit to a lesser extent than in the public network: it is 14 percent more prevalent in the subsidized private network (from 41.5% in

2009 to 54.8% in 2017) and the percentage of students with a low ISEC has increased fivefold.

It seems clear that in the public network, these changes are significant and may have been partly responsible for the fall in the scores in this stratum. It should be recalled that the 'repetition' variable causes the biggest difference in results, over 40 points for this competence in 2017, followed by the 'family origin' variable, with a difference of 24 points. However, the changes outlined above in the subsidized private network have not been as significant or extensive as those described regarding the public stratum.

		PUBLIC D		SUBSIDIZED PRIVATE D	
		2009	2017	2009	2017
STUDENTS	% of total in system	39.3	47.3	20.6	26.3
	No. of students	6,919	10,084	3,626	5,604
	% of network that they represent	79.3	90.7	41.5	54.8
SUITABILITY	SUITABLE	91.8	89	96.2	95,6
	UNSUITABLE	8.2	11	3.8	4,4
ORIGIN	% IMMIGRANTS in stratum	4.9	10.7	2.5	3.1
ISEC	% Low level	17.5	31.6	3.6	15.6
	% Medium-low level	36.1	26.5	11.1	24.9
	% High-medium level	28.7	23.4	35.7	29.0
	% High level	17.8	18.5	49.6	30.5
	Average ISEC of stratum	0.14	-0.19	0.20	0.23
HOME LANGUAGE	% Basque-speaking students	24.5	28.7	34.7	42.6
	% non-Basque-speaking students	75.5	71.3	65.3	57.4
LANGUAGE USE	Overall rate	3.7	3.6	4.0	4.0