



What does a bilingual school mean for minoritized languages like Nasa-yuwe or Basque?

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Introduction

- Learning of a dominant language is no longer a problem for young speakers of minoritized languages.
- The problem is to become a real bilingual speaker when one of the languages is a minoritized one.
- Bilingual schools involving a minoritized language, supported by social demand and pedagogical rigour can achieve that their students become bilingual with a real and competent practical use in both languages (Idiazabal and Dolz, 2013).
- But not all the (so-called) bilingual schools attain this result. It is a difficult task but it is not impossible.
- Basque-Nasa cooperation shows some interesting achievements.



The project of immersion schools in Nasa-yuwe : an ongoing experience

- Nasa-yuwe is one of the native American languages of Colombia spoken by approximately 100.000 people. In the region of Cauca, around 30% are able to speak Nasa-yuwe as a first language. Most of them are bilingual Nasa-yuwe/Spanish speakers.
- The *Wasakkwêwe'sx* are immersive schools carried out entirely in the Nasa-yuwe language.
- They started in 2013, in the Indigenous Reservation of Toribío, with a group of 7 children between 3 and 5 years old.
- In 2014 an additional school was created, in the village of San Francisco within the Toribío Reservation. Two more similar schools were created in 2016 in the same area of Cauca.
- The project enables to develop the bilingual model for at least up to 12 years old children.



The process of Nasa Basque exchange

- The beginning of the process (2010)
- Main steps:
 - analysis of the sociolinguistic situation of the original language (a self-diagnosis)
 - creation of a group of specialists *Atpu'cxsave'sx* (promoters)
 - creation of a pilot indigenous school experience (*Wasakkwêwe'sx*)
 - change of the current BIE education model
- Basque and Nasa-Yuwe collaboration (since 2012)
 - Nasa organizations (CRIC - UAIIN and ACIN- *Çxhab Wala Kiwe*) named a local expert to participate in a training course in the Basque Country
 - Bilingual teacher training, normalization of minority languages, advise on the creation of school material, etc. were carried out by the Chair and NGO Garabide members
- Coincidences between Basques in 1960 and Nasas in 2012.



Changes observed (1)

- When working entirely in a minoritized language a brand new school model emerges.
- Children grow up bilingual and biliterate
- *Wasakkwêwe'sx* schools becomes a focus of interest for the whole community.
- From the school to other social spheres: media, market, social events.



Changes observed (2)

- Expectations arise, concerning the knowledge and the use of the language: for teachers, for parents involved (assisting mothers), for authorities, and for school children.
- Enlargement of the presence of the language.
- Adults decide to become literate in Nasa-yuwe “children are taking the minoritized language home”.
- The language begins to gain prestige.



New needs appear of which people hardly had consciousness before the experience:

- Selection and training of teachers and their involvement in the project is essential .
- Families play a decisive role.
- Bilingual schools become a reference for Nasa-yuwe language promoters.
- The right to one's own language, gains weight in the social demands of Nasa people.



Implications for linguists and specialists of language didactics

- The **knowledge about a language** is not enough to ensure that students learn and use the language.
- Bilingual or multilingual schools that include a minoritized language are the main challenge for **Language Didactics**
- Bi-multilingual schools are research laboratories



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