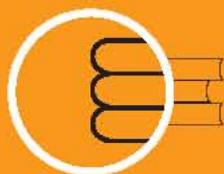# LEVEL B2 IN BASQUE

AT THE END OF OBLIGATORY EDUCATION (4th ESO)

SUMMARY OF THE SPANISH VERSION

ISEI·IVEI

IRAKAS-SISTEMA EBALUATU
ETA IKERTZEKO ERAKUNDEA
INSTITUTO VASCO DE EVALUACIÓN
E INVESTIGACIÓN EDUCATIVA

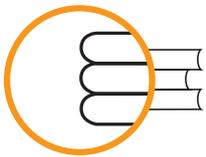**EUSKO JAURLARITZA** · **GOBIERNO VASCO**

HEZKUNTZA, UNIBERTSITATE
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UNIVERSIDADES E INVESTIGACIÓN

ISEI·IVEI

LEVEL B2 IN BASQUE

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PROLOGUE

Firstly, I would like to emphasise the importance of the research work we are carrying out. In my opinion, it is the beginning of a new era in language evaluation for our Education System. For the first time, and within an international framework, we can determine what our students know at the end of their compulsory education. With this test we have constructed a model which will permit future evaluation using the same "*yardstick*".

There has been a great deal of debate, in many fields, about whether the level of language education provided to students is sufficient. But the fact is that this debate often goes on without any real supporting data, and the work we are doing can finally establish a basis for sensible debate. However, there are few surprises in store for those with experience in the effect schools can have on the recuperation of minority languages.

The limited ability of schools to teach languages is a well-known fact of socio-linguistics, and even more so in language learning. Schools can only offer the student a limited language level, because it can only present students with some of the elements proper to the natural language learning context. Furthermore, it does not offer a guarantee of interaction with native speakers (the natural method of language learning).

In this way, it has been noticed that the level of Basque evaluated in this work presents characteristics which are in keeping with school performance on the whole. If we look at the variable factors (except when the language is spoken at home), we observe the same factors which are present in other subjects.

However, we must not be pessimistic. Schools can improve and this is the aim of the evaluation: improvement. This research study of level B2 constitutes an advance in this direction. By offering teachers and schools these types of tests, we can clearly establish what and how students should be taught. Additionally, if the Department of Education, Universities and Investigation implemented a voluntary certification of level B2, this would give added motivation to students and teachers. That, at least, is our opinion.

But, it should not stop there. Society should recognise that the responsibility for the recuperation of Basque cannot be left solely, almost, in the hands of schools, as has been the case for the last twenty-five years. Education plays a fundamental role, integrating students with different levels of Basque into society and often doing so with very little recognition. But we should recognise that this is not enough if we want to educate persons to live in 'Basque'. Models of education can achieve results but they cannot guarantee that all students become 'Basque-speakers'. There is no school that can achieve this goal, unless it enjoys the support of other areas of society.

Josu Sierra Orrantia
Director of ISEI-IVEI

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE TEST

1.1.1. Objectives

The main objective of this test is the following: given a specific linguistic level, B2, evaluate the knowledge of Basque among 4th ESO students.

This linguistic level was chosen to provide an evaluation of the level and content of knowledge which may be outside – and often coincide with – the teaching curriculum. Both the level and content were taken from the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* of the European Council[1], specifically, for the B2 level described therein.

This Basque test, in keeping with the criteria of the *Reference Framework*, measures the communicative and linguistic ability of the student; it focuses on four key abilities: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Student's linguistic competence, (use of grammar, syntax, vocabulary, etc) are also evaluated in the test.

In addition to the general objective above, the test also aims to evaluate if the knowledge of Basque of 4th ESO students has reached the B2 level. In the future, a test will be proposed to certify the B2 level of competence in Basque.

1.1.2. Basis and general characteristics of the test

As mentioned above, the fundamental model for the design of the test has been the *Common European Framework of Reference*. This framework, besides containing a declaration of principles and intentions, is a very useful teaching tool. For over ten years, European countries have been doing testing based on the *Framework* in the study of applied linguistics and pedagogy. By using such a precise model as the *Framework*, language use has been analysed and the required levels of linguistic ability and knowledge have been investigated in depth.

The test is ideally suited for use by all language professionals and encourages reflection on teaching objectives and methods. The *Common European Framework of Reference* offers common criteria for analysis and evaluation of language ability, based on certain fundamental objectives. The test is not obligatory but can be used for orientation purposes.

The *Framework* establishes equal criteria throughout Europe and provides a common basis for the development of language programs, school curricula, exams, textbooks, etc. Furthermore, it provides guidelines for the skills and knowledge to be developed and the necessary capacities for effective language use.

The *Framework* offers material for reflection for education specialists, program designers and teachers as well as, most useful in our case, evaluation institutions.
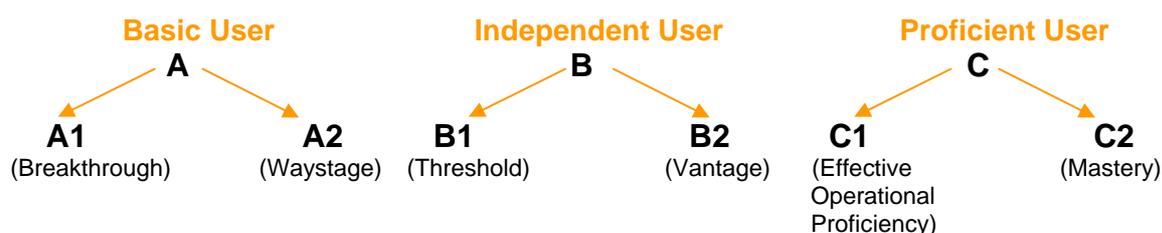
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[1] Council of Europe (2001): *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment.* Strasbourg, 2001. In Spanish: Instituto Cervantes (2002): *Marco común europeo de referencia para las lenguas: aprendizaje, enseñanza, evaluación.* Council of Europe, Ministry of Education and Sport, (Anaya), Madrid.

By providing a common basis for the explicit description of objectives, contents and methodology, the *Reference Framework* helps to explain courses, programs and results with greater clarity and encourages international co-operation in the area of modern languages. The establishment of objective evaluation criteria for language ability facilitates both teaching and language skills evaluation.

The *Framework* is designed according to a communicative and socio—constructivist perspective. It approaches language use according to its context, that is, linked to the community and culture, favouring cultural diversity and encouraging the learning of second languages.

The *Reference Framework* emphasises the importance of linguistic communication ability as well as other related elements such as context, language environment, texts, textual environment, etc. Additionally, if average linguistic research takes four abilities into consideration, the *Framework* describes five, as speaking is divided into two areas: production and interaction.

The *Framework* gives a detailed explanation and definition of three broad levels of language acquisition: *Basic User* (**A**), *Independent User* (**B**) and *Proficient User* (**C**), each containing two sub-levels, as indicated in the chart below:

Basic User		**Independent User**		**Proficient User**	
A		**B**		**C**	
A1	**A2**	**B1**	**B2**	**C1**	**C2**
(Breakthrough)	(Waystage)	(Threshold)	(Vantage)	(Effective Operational Proficiency)	(Mastery)

Some European language certificates are based on this classification. (*First Certificate* in English; *DELE* in Spanish, *Grundstufe* in German, etc.)

Level B2 of the *Framework*, or the *Vantage Independent Level,* reflects the third specification of the European Council. This level is defined as follows: *Limited Operational Proficiency.* At this level, the student is able to understand the main ideas within complex texts; on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical subject matter in his field of specialisation.

As shown in the following chart, B2 level students are able to speak spontaneously and fluently with native speakers. Thus communication is established without undue effort on the part of either interlocutor. In addition, at this level, students are able to write specific and clear texts about certain subjects, defend individual points of view or opinions regarding general subjects, and evaluate the pros and cons of given options.

The following chart highlights level B2 within the levels established by the *Reference Framework*:

Chart 1. Unified Reference Levels: global scale.

Proficient User	**C2**	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.	
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.	
Independent User	**B2**	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed texts on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	
	B1	Can under stand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected texts on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.	
Basic User	**A2**	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.	
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.	

As indicated in the chart above, a B2 student can interact with native speakers with a large degree of fluency and spontaneity and thus communication is established without undue effort on the part of either interlocutor. Also, at this level the student can produce clear and detailed texts on a variety of subjects as well as defend their point of view on general issues indicating the pros and cons of different options.

To understand better the linguistic level of B2, and according to the *Auto-evaluation Section of the Reference Framework,* students, within each specific ability, should be able to deal with the following:

Reading	- Read articles and reports related to contemporary issues. - Understand the points of view or opinions of a variety of authors. - Understand contemporary literary prose.
Writing	- Write texts on a wide variety of subjects of personal interest. - Write reports or essays transmitting information or giving reasons supporting or refuting a specific point of view. - Write letters that emphasise the importance of certain events or experiences.
Listening	- Understand extended speeches and conferences as well as follow complex lines of argument, providing the subject is relatively familiar. - Understand television news and programs as well as films spoken in Basque.
Speaking	- Present clear and detailed description of subjects related to their area of knowledge as well as explain a point of view or opinion presenting the pros and cons of various options. - Participate in a conversation with a certain degree of fluency and spontaneity, allowing normal communication with native speakers. - Participate actively in discussions in common situations, explaining or depending personal points of view.
Use of language	- Expand vocabulary regarding general subjects or of personal interest. - Avoid repetition of terms even when doubting correct lexical usage. - Grammatical errors do not impede communication. Errors are infrequent and unsystematic. - Adequate level of organisation, clarity and coherence in written expression (grammar, spelling, etc.).

1.1.3. Other models

In addition to the theoretical basis provided by *the European Reference Framework*, other evaluation models for this level have been taken into account:

▪ **ALTE**[2]. This is related to the *Reference Framework* and includes the same levels and linguistic abilities as defined by the *Framework*. Rather than an evaluation, it is a definition of evaluation criteria.

At the level established by ALTE, the student should be able to effectively use linguistic structures, employ a varied vocabulary and different communication strategies. The abilities required by students at this level and for the distinct abilities are as follows:

- *Reading*: Able to find specific information within a text after reading it once and understand explicit orders or advice. Can extract basic information and principal ideas from a text.

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[2] **ALTE:** *Association of Language Testers in Europe*. **www.alte.org**.

- **Writing**: Able to take notes, write letters with a specific aim and reports or essays.

- **Speaking and comprehension**: Able to understand conferences dealing with specific and common topics. Can speak about certain common subjects and hold a conversation.

▪ **FIRST**[3]**.** English test from Cambridge University. The test takes into consideration both the *European Framework* and the classification from ALTE. The *First Certificate* exam is the equivalent of the B2 level.

This prestigious test has existed since 1939, although activities and criteria are frequently revised and updated. As this is a very comprehensive and highly regarded test, the *FIRST* has been taken as a model when designing the structure and activities of the Basque test.

The activities established for each ability are as follows:

- **Reading**: The most commonly used texts are the following: narratives, expositions and arguments both long and short. The general context is literary or journalistic and it evaluates both general and specific comprehension abilities. The questions and activities are varied: insert paragraphs, answering questions about the text, multiple-choice questions, etc. All questions are specific.

- **Writing.** Given a subject, the student must write a text. All students must write two texts: one is a letter and the other a narration, an article or an explanation. A minimum number of words are required.

- **Listening**: After listening to a text, various activities are performed, such as, filling in the blanks, multiple-choice questions, complete phrases, etc.

- **Speaking**: The student must speak about certain common subjects decided beforehand. This part of the test is divided into three sections: firstly, an interview, secondly a picture is produced and the student must speak about its contents, and finally, a dialogue is organised between students.

- **Use of language**: This is dedicated to grammar, syntax, vocabulary and spelling. Activities include the restructuring of phrases, word formation, error correction, etc.

All the texts used in the *First Certificate* test are real, that is, they are taken from the media, literature, etc. We have considered this an important element and the design of the Basque test has been undertaken using the same method.

▪ Other tests for this language level were also taken into consideration, such as:

- Exams prepared by the Basque Service: PL1, PL2 and EGA[4], as well as the types of exams used in them and their error correction criteria.

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[3] *FIRST Certificate in English*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003.

[4] Central Publication Service of the Basque Government (2001): *2000ko irakasleen hizkuntza eskakizunak (azterketak)*, Vitoria-Gasteiz.

- Other B2 level exams:
  - *French*: *Diplôme de Langue Française*, level 3 (*Independent User*). The student must be able use fundamental structures of the French language, show a good command of vocabulary and use a variety of communication strategies in different commonplace situations.
  - *Spanish*: *Diplomas de Español como Lengua Extranjera* (DELE), Instituto Cervantes. Level B2 (or *Intermediate level*), the student must demonstrate the ability to deal with commonplace situations and communication, providing these do not require the use of specialised language.
  - *Catalan*: *Certificat de Nivell Intermedi de Catalá (B),* Generalitat de Catalunya. Organised by the Department of Culture.

1.2. DESIGN OF THE TEST

The questions are divided into two test forms (form A and B). There are shared activities and those which are specific to each form.

The test is divided into the following sections: reading, listening, writing, speaking and use of language. These have a wide range of different activities (multiple-choice questions, writings of a text, fill in the blanks, etc).

Activities for writing and listening are taken from real texts, that is, from commonplace sources such as literature, education, the media, Internet, etc. For this reason, the texts are different in appearance and content. It should be noted that the texts offer different levels of difficulty and aim to evaluate both general and specific comprehension.

For the evaluation of writing and speaking, diverse contexts are offered for students to produce a variety of texts using the information provided in the test. These activities are designed to evaluate the writing and speaking abilities of the student.

In addition to the tests performed by the students, questionnaires are prepared in order to collect information and identify the characteristics of the school: one for the student, one for the Basque teaching staff, and another for the school headmasters.

1.2.1. Reading

In order to evaluate reading comprehension, five different texts are used although each student only deals with three of the five. As mentioned above, the texts are authentic, that is, taken from literature, the media or from academic materials.

All texts are explanatory and give specific information except literary texts and are varied both in terms of content and presentation.

- *Narration*: this is a literary text and the specific comprehension of the student is evaluated through questions although there is only one question regarding the general meaning of the text. These are multiple-choice questions given to all students participating in the test.
- *Explanatory text 1*: this is a descriptive text; although some terms are fairly technical, they are accompanied by photographs. This text aims to evaluate general comprehension, text structure and the development of ideas. Consequently, the student must fill in blanks with missing words in order to create a logical flow of information.

- *Advertisement:* this consists of seven short explanatory paragraphs. This texts aims to evaluate the ability of the student to find the specific information asked in the accompanying questions. In any case, this information does not appear literally in the text and the activities require the student to deduce and extract implicit information.
- *Explanatory text 2:* this is a descriptive text taken from the Internet. It contains a number of technical terms and it aims to evaluate student's comprehension of detailed information (specific data, opinions, conclusions, etc). In this activity multiple-choice questions are used, that is, the student must choose the correct answer from 4 options.
- *Explanatory text 3:* this text is taken from the media, specifically from an article with photographs and presented in column format.
  This activity evaluates the comprehension of textual paragraphs, that is, specific information, and the students must choose a title for the various paragraphs of the text.

1.2.2. Writing

To evaluate this ability five different activities or assignments are used: a letter, a narration, a description, an article and an argumentative text. In each case the conditions and requirements for each writing exercise are explained.

Each student writes two texts: one obligatory and common for all, the letter, and the second, a choice between the two options presented. For this ability, each student had to complete the narrative text exercise and, as mentioned above, two of the other texts offered:

- Students doing form A: an explanatory text and the advertisement.
- Students doing form B: another explanatory text and an article.

- *Writing assignment 1:* the letter. The student is presented with the following assignment: after making a purchase by catalogue they must write about their dissatisfaction with the purchased product. As a consequence, they must write a claim. The students are given the advertisement and other information about the product and based on this information they must write the letter. The letter must be a minimum of 80 words in length.

  The letter should have a formal register. For this reason, the text should be written as a letter (place, date, opening and closing expressions and signature) with the appropriate formality and include the name of the sender and addressee. The purpose of the letter should be clear: to express a complaint about the product.

- *Writing assignment 2:* a narration. The student is asked to write a story for publication in a local magazine. The story must meet one condition: it must begin with a phrase provided in the test and be related to it. The story must be a minimum of 100 words in length.

  The text should have a narrative structure: presentation, action and a conclusion. The style must also be appropriate: a story for publication in a local magazine and, therefore, formal in tone.

  The ideas within the narrative should be organised coherently for the purpose of the story. The unity of the text must be maintained at all times and new ideas or

situations must be introduced at the appropriate time. It must meet the objective of the exercise: tell a story.

- *Writing assignment 3:* an article. As in the other cases, students are given a specific situation upon which the article is to be based. The article should be written for publication in a school newspaper and therefore be read by both students and teachers. The composition should be a minimum of 100 words in length.

  The article should have the form of an article written for a school newspaper, that is, an explanatory text. It should contain the presentation, development and conclusion of the topic. It should also have a minimum structure including other elements such as anecdotes and description. The style of the piece should be appropriate for any audience: that is, formal.

  The assignment must include the appropriate content, that is, explain an event or situation (for example: where, what, how, when, etc). The ideas should be organised and presented coherently, maintaining the unity of the text and introducing new ideas where appropriate. The components of the text should be connected logically (assimilating anecdotes into the explanation, etc.). The piece should meet the objectives of the assignment: inform the students and teachers of the school directly and pleasantly.

- *Writing assignment 4:* opinion or argumentative text. Students must write a report about a particular subject, explaining their opinions and reflections. Their opinions should be well reasoned and should address opposing opinions. The composition should have a minimum of 100 words.

  The structure of the text must be as follows: the initial theme, the body of the argument and a conclusion. The text may be brief and need not develop all arguments in the same manner. The style of the piece should be appropriate: that is, formal in tone.

  The student must keep to the theme presented, which should be the unifying point of the text. The student should provide at least one example and clearly explain what they are in favour of and what they are against. The writing should be coherent, presenting ideas and opinions in a clear and ordered manner, preserving the unity of the text. The piece must meet the objective of the assignment: the student must give an opinion and justify it with a specific example.

- *Writing assignment 5:* given a context, the student must write an argumentative text, showing the advantages and positive aspects of a certain idea. The composition should have a minimum of 100 words.

  The text should have the appropriate structure: initial thesis, body of the argument and conclusion. The tone and style should be appropriate to be read by students and teachers, that is, formal.

  The ideas and opinions expressed should be well organised and coherent preserving the unity of the text. The aim of the article should be clear: the reasons for the proposal, its advantages, etc.

  The exercises explained above are open and are to be evaluated according to the following criteria: content and coherence, style and format, accuracy, cohesion and vocabulary.

- *Content and coherence:* This evaluates the significance of the piece, that is, the extent to which the objectives and given topic of the exercise have been developed. Additionally, the clear presentation and organisation of the required information will be evaluated. Apart from its coherence, it will be assessed if the text fulfilled its aim
- *Style and format:* This evaluates the quality and form of the text as a whole. Also, it will evaluate whether the text is of the type requested and has the proper tone and style.
- *Accuracy:* This identifies any significant linguistic errors, that is, morpho-syntactic errors, errors in syntax and spelling.
- *Unity*: This evaluates the textual connections and conjunctions used as well as the articulation of the text from one sentence to the next.
- *Vocabulary*: The vocabulary used will be evaluated according to variety, precision and appropriateness.

These criteria are divided into five *bands* or categories: very insufficient, insufficient, sufficient, good, excellent.

1.2.3. Use of language

In this section two types of content are evaluated: general use of language and syntactic structure.

For the first type of content multiple-choice questions are used and for the second a phrase rewriting exercise.

- *General Use of Language:* The following contents are evaluated: vocabulary, syntax, locution, semantics and grammar. The test consists of 33 questions. 7 are common to both forms of the test and the remaining 27 are different.

- *Syntactic Structure*: students are evaluated according to the re-writing of phrases. Both forms contain the same 10 phrases to be rewritten. These should be rewritten using changed connectors or transforming the phrase.

1.2.4. Listening

In order to evaluate this ability three distinct extracts are used, all of them authentic, taken from the radio and television.

- *Text 1:* This is a text explaining a historical event. It is taken from the media, specifically, from the radio. Using this text the comprehension of general and specific information is evaluated.
- *Text 2:* This is also taken from the radio and deals with an issue of interest to young people. The theme is explained and arguments are used to defend certain opinions. This is a dialogue that takes place between two people after a presenter narrates the piece of news. The exercise includes a series of multiple-choice questions. Students must demonstrate their understanding of the dialogue and draw conclusions and deductions regarding the general and specific information presented.
- *Text 3*: This is related to the environment of the Basque Country, taken from a documentary. This explanatory text could be said to belong to the academic field.

- The exercise contains no direct questions but consists of eight incomplete sentences which students must complete with the information given.

Each student will listen to two texts, the first of which is common to both forms of the test.

1.2.5. Speaking

In order to evaluate the oral ability of the students three different activities are used: an interview with an examiner, presentation and a dialogue between students.

- *Interview*: the examiners pose questions to the students about youth oriented topics: their lifestyle, school experiences, vacations, childhood experiences, etc. This activity is aimed at guaranteeing that the student understands the questions and is able to respond easily and correctly. The student is evaluated on their ability to speak in present and past forms (correct use of verb tenses and language tools indicating time), provide general and specific information, express future plans, etc.

- *Presentation*: based on a given topic (a picture presented beforehand) the student must give information. The students generally describe what they see in the picture and, later, express what the picture suggests to them.
  In this activity students must demonstrate their ability to speak about a given topic and, based on it, expand on the information or link it to their personal experience or other issues.

- *Dialogue between students:* students are given a subject and the pair must organise a discussion. Each student must demonstrate his ability to maintain a conversation, keeping to basics aspects of communication (speaking and allowing others to speak, disagreeing or introducing different ideas, etc.). Also, in this activity students must give arguments to support their opinions and counter the arguments or opinions of others.

The criteria used in the evaluation are the following: forms of expression, facility of speech and correct usage. Each of these have specific criteria as indicated in the chart below:

Criteria for speaking		
Forms of expression	*Autonomy*	These criteria evaluate the independence of the expression of the student. For example, if the answers to questions are long or short, if help or prompting was required to answer, etc.
	Interaction	These criteria evaluate whether students use the basic rules of communication. For example, allowing others to speak, responding to heard conversation, etc.
	Discourse	These criteria evaluate the facility of student speech. It considers the speed of delivery, duration, linguistic doubts, pauses, cohesion of context, etc.
	Pronunciation	Theses criteria evaluate the diction and intonation of the student, whether speech is difficult to understand due to pronunciation problems.

Facility of speech	*Discourse level*	This general concept evaluates the intelligibility of student's speech. The appropriate context is verified as well as the proper organisation of ideas. The general coherence of discourse is evaluated. .
	Vocabulary	The proper use of vocabulary is evaluated including accuracy and variety.
Correction	*Grammar and syntax*	These criteria evaluate both student grammar and syntax: verb tenses and cases, auxiliary verbs, simple or complex phrasing, use of conjunctions and connectors, etc.

Each criterion has five levels: very good, good, sufficient, insufficient and very insufficient.

The chart below gives a general indication of the mentioned criteria:

	Ability	**Activities and texts**	**Number of questions and evaluation criteria**
Written	**Reading**	• Explanatory text • Explanatory text: article • **Literary text: narration**[5] • Explanatory text: academic • Brief explanatory text: advertisement	8 (multiple-choice) 8 (multiple-choice) 9 (multiple-choice) 7 (multiple-choice) 10 (multiple-choice)
	Writing	• **Letter** • Narration • Article • Argumentative text • Other article	5 criteria
Oral	**Listening**	• **Explanatory text** • Other explanatory text • Explanatory and argumentative text: dialogue	10 (multiple-choice) 8 (limited correction) 8 (multiple-choice)
	Speaking	• **Interview** • **Presentation** • **Dialogue (between students)**	7 criteria
Use of language		• **General knowledge of language: grammar, vocabulary, etc.** • **Syntactic structure (rewriting)**	33 (multiple-choice, 7 all students) 10 (limited correction)

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[5] The activities marked in bold are those which were performed by all students.

All of these criteria were divided into two forms: forms A and B. Each form consists of three parts: the first part dedicated to the oral part of the exam, the second to the first half of the written exam and the third to the second half of the written exam.

	FORM A	FORM B
Listening	▪ **Explanatory text**[6] ▪ Explanatory and argumentative text (dialogue)	▪ **Explanatory text** ▪ Explanatory text
Written Part One	▪ *Writing*: **Letter** ▪ *Reading*: **Literary text (dialogue)**	▪ *Writing*: **Letter** ▪ *Reading*: explanatory text (article).
Written Part Two	▪ *Reading*: - Explanatory text - Brief explanatory text: advertisement ▪ *Writing* ▪ Use of language: **- General language knowledge.** **- Rewriting**	▪ *Reading*: **- Literary text: dialogue** - Explanatory text: academic ▪ *Writing* ▪ Use of language: **- General language knowledge.** **- Rewriting.**

1.2.6. Questionnaires

In addition to the test, three questionnaires were prepared regarding the context of the school. One questionnaire was aimed at teachers of Basque language, another to students, and the third was aimed at collecting information about the number of teaching hours dedicated to language learning in the centre.

- *Questionnaire for students:* this consisted of 31 questions dealing with three areas. The first was focussed on the family of the student, the second focussed on the centre curriculum and the third dealt with the methodology used in the teaching of Basque.

- *Questionnaire for Basque teachers:* this consisted of 19 questions dealing with four areas: training, use of Basque in the school, global treatment of languages, methodology and evaluation.

- Finally, the headmasters of the school filled out a table indicating in what language the various subjects were taught for the four years of ESO.

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[6] The activities marked in bold are those which were performed by all students.

1.3. APPLICATION

1.3.1. Pilot test

Prior to the application of the Basque test, a pilot test was carried out. This test dealt with the four linguistic abilities as well as a section dedicated to Use of Language, that is, an entire test (including speaking). The students who participated in the pilot test belonged to the models A, B and D. The principal objectives of the pilot test were the following:

1. *Verify the function of the activities proposed in the test.*

   After the application of the pilot test and analysing the results, certain sections of the test where altered in order to adapt the final format of the test.

2. *Ensure that the Model A students could take a test of these characteristics and at this level.*

   In the case of the Model A students, the conditions of the test were as follows:

   - In selecting the student groups the results of the ESO Evaluation for the year 2000[7] were taken into account. In this evaluation some of the Model A groups of various schools achieved results above the global average for Basque. Consequently, it was decided to carry out the pilot test in some of these schools.
   - Additionally, in each of the selected schools the top Model A groups were chosen.
   - Finally, some students from the Model A groups performed the complete test (including speaking).

After carrying out the pilot test and analysing the results, it could be seen that these Model A students lacked the minimum capacities and abilities required by the level B2 Basque test. None of this group achieved the minimum required results.

1.3.2. Definitive application

The test was performed by 63 groups of students in the 4th year of ESO (Compulsory Secondary Education), after having made those changes considered necessary based on the results of the pilot test. For the test, a work group was created co-ordinated by ISEI-IVEI which also included certain external collaborators.

Thus, four external persons were contracted for the application of the written test. Furthermore, the Oral Evaluation was assisted by various advisors (they work at Teachers' Advisory Centres), who also helped in the correction of this part of the test. Finally, and as will be explained later, the correction of the written part of the test was performed with the help of outside experts. All of these persons were duly informed of their roles and functions.

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[7] ISEI-IVEI (2000): *ESO Evaluation Report, Basque and Literature. Results according to linguistic models*, p.14. www.isei-ivei.net.

In addition to the testing personnel, various controllers from ISEI-IVEI were on hand to evaluate the development of the process.

Before going to the schools, throughout October, an official communication was sent to the headmasters informing them of the procedures (this was the first contact with the schools) and later through a call confirming the information sent and fixing a date for a meeting. They were informed of the details of the evaluation (objectives and characteristics of the test, time, resources used, etc.). The Basque teachers were given the questionnaire described above.

After performing all the tests the correction stage began. With the results obtained, the process of revision and analysis of these results started.

1.3.3. Sample

With regard to the sample, the geographical area of the evaluation was the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country. The population taken into account was the entire student body enrolled in 4th year ESO in the academic year 2004-2005.

4th year ESO 2004-05	Linguistic Model		Total
	Model B	Model D	
Schools	148	181	329
Students	3775	7535	11310

The following criteria were used for the selection of the sample:

- A range of schools were selected with linguistic Models B and D. After carrying out the pilot test it was decided not to test the Model A level for the reasons given above.

- Each linguistic model was considered as a centre. That is, in the case that a school had one group or more of Model B in the ESO stage and another group or more of Model D, for the purposes of the test one of them or both could be chosen.

- A sample was chosen in two stages: first the schools were chosen at random according to centre levels. Later, in each selected centre, a single 4th ESO class was selected, also at random.

- All of the student of the groups selected constituted the sample. However, the results of some students were not taken into account, for example: immigrant students who had arrived in the Basque Country within the last year, or those who were unable to perform the test due to some incapacity (with an adapted curriculum).

- The Basque test was given to 63 groups of the 4th year of ESO. In total, 61 schools participated since, in two schools, both a Model B and a Model D group were selected.

Sample of Schools

Of the 63 schools within the sample, 39 groups were Model D and 24 Model B.

	Linguistic model		Total
	Model B	Model D	
Total Groups	24	39	63
	38.1%	61.9%	100.0%

Sample of students

As mentioned above, it includes only those students who completed all sections of the test (not including the speaking). The sample, by linguistic models, is as follows:

	Linguistic models		Total
	Model B	Model D	
Total Students	447	744	1191
	37.5%	62.5%	100.,0%

With regard to school types, the participating schools were the following:

Type		Total
Private	Public	
35	28	63
55.5%	44.5%	100.0%

The percentage according to the number of students participating was as follows:

Type		Total
Private	Public	
716	475	1191
60.1%	39.9%	100.0%

The sample according to sex was as follows: of the 1191 participants, 594 were girls and 597 were boys.

		Nº	%
SEX	**Boys**	597	50.1
	Girls	594	49.9
	Total	**1191**	**100.0**

Additionally, the Basque teachers of each school filled out the questionnaires. The table below shows the information related to the questionnaires:

	Questionnaires	
	Teachers	**Students**
Total	**62**	**1191**

Language use at home

In addition to the school type, student sex, and linguistic model, the language most used by students at home also has a great impact on the results of the evaluation. This information was obtained through the questionnaires given to students, which included questions such as:

– *In what language do you speak to your parents?*
– *What is the family language and the frequency of use?*

Based on the answers given by students, the use of Basque was divided into two categories:

– **Basque**: The parents speak Basque and Basque is spoken always or nearly always at home. Either the father or mother speaks Basque and Basque is spoken always or nearly always at home.
– **Not Basque***:* The parents do not speak Basque and it is not spoken at home.

With reference to the models, 63.2% of the Model D students do not speak Basque at home, while for Model B students this figure is 95.7%.

Of those studying in Model D, 273 speak Basque at home with their parents, that is, 36.7%. In the case of Model B students, the number is only 19, that is, 4.3%.

These figures are presented in the table below:

| | Linguistic model | | | | Total | |
| | Model B | | Model D | | | |
	Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%
Not Basque	428	95.7	470	63.2	898	75.4
Basque	19	4.3	273	36.7	292	24.5
Do not answer	---	---	1	0.1	1	0.1
Total	**447**	**100.0**	**744**	**100.0**	**1191**	**100.0**

The distribution of student sex and language used at home is presented in the following table:

| | | Language spoken at home | | | | Total | |
| | | Not Basque | | Basque | | | |
		Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%
SEX	**Boys**	455	76.4	141	23.6	**596**	**100.0**
	Girls	427	72.0	166	28.0	**595**	**100.0**
Total		**883**	**74.2**	**307**	**25.8**	**1191**	**100.0**

The information is cross-referenced according to sex: of those not speaking Basque at home, 455 (76.4%) are boys and 427 are girls (72%). Of those who do speak Basque at home, 141 are girls (23.6%) and 166 are boys (28%).

1.3.4. Speaking test

The evaluation of speaking required special considerations. Given that a test of this type evaluates speaking for the first time, the design, application and the correction of this part of the test were given particular attention.

Rather than taking test results as a whole, a sub-sample was selected: 16 groups and 16 students[8] from each one were chosen. This selection was rotating. In total, the speaking test was taken by 243 students, 123 from Model B and 120 from Model D.

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[8] It should be noted that two groups did not have 16 students.

The schools which participated in the oral test are presented according to linguistic model below:

	Model B	Model D
Schools and students	8 groups: 123 students	8 groups: 120 students

After agreeing to a date, time and other conditions with the schools, the students taking the test were sent to a separate classroom. In this testing room there were two examiners and the room was equipped with a video camera to record all of the sessions (which also allows later corrections to be made).

The students performed the test in pairs according to alphabetical order. During the sessions, one examiner delivered the test while the other marked it. At the end of the session, both examiners agreed on the mark given.

This process was carried out in two parts, so that 8 pairs were evaluated before a break and the 8 remaining after the break. Each pair spent 15 to 20 minutes doing the test. While one pair was doing the test, the other students were with a collaborator analysing the material for 10 minutes.

The entire process of the speaking evaluation was performed as follows:

- At the beginning, the test was explained to the students selected (the three sections, pair work, etc.).
- The first pair was given an envelope (containing a photograph and the topic to be talked about with their test partner) to prepare the topic for some minutes. During this time, the students were allowed to take notes or develop a type of script to assist them during the test.
- When the first pair entered the test room, the session began. The three sections were performed and at the end the two students returned to the classroom.
- During the session, as indicated above, one examiner delivered the test while the other marked it. At the end of the session, both examiners agreed on a final mark.
- After this, the second pair entered the test room, and so on until the test was completed.

Specialised examiners and correctors were employed for this task (experts from ISEI-IVEI and Advisory Centres), since this was considered necessary for the sessions and the oral correction activity. In addition to these specialists, a colleague directed the organisation of the students and the procedures for the sessions. All of these external experts received training in order to guarantee the correct execution of the test.

As mentioned above, the first evaluation was carried out during the session itself between the two examiners. Later, using the video recordings, the second evaluation was made.

1.3.5. Dates and procedures

The evaluation was carried out during the month of November 2004 and the first week of December.

The evaluation took place in two phases: the written test (and listening) was held on one day and the speaking test was given on another (at least for those students participating in this part of the test).

The first phase took place over the course of a morning according to the following: listening, the first booklet, before the break; later the second booklet and the questionnaire. The entire test took approximately three hours. These three hours were spread over a morning after analysing the situation of each school.

On the same day of the application, the rest of the material was gathered: the questionnaire completed by the Basque teachers and the table detailing language teaching procedures as provided by the headmasters of the school.

1.4.   CORRECTION

The questions were divided into two general groups: open-response questions, that is those where students must provide their own answer, and closed, where the student must choose the correct answer from among various options.

According to abilities, the evaluation activities consisted of the following:

- *Reading*: this was evaluated through closed questions where students must choose between various options.
  According to the level of knowledge tested, the test may include various types of activities, such as:
    - Multiple-choice questions.
    - Paragraph headings.
    - Connecting texts.
    - Fill in the blanks exercises with various choices (connectors).

  This part of the test consisted of between 25 and 28 questions.

- *Listening:* two of the three activities in this section were closed (multiple-choice questions) and one open where student must fill in blanks according to the information they heard. However, the answers are not entirely open as each blank had only three possible answers. This part of the test consisted of 18 questions.

- *Writing:* all the activities in this section are open (write a text based on a given context). The correction of this part of the test is more difficult because of the open nature of possible answers. Various criteria were fixed and the corrections were carried out by specialised personnel. This activity was evaluated according to 7 criteria.

– *Speaking*: as in the case above, the students are given a context to which they must respond orally. This section of the test is open and the evaluation was carried out by specialised examiners. As indicted above, in the case of speaking, in addition to the mark given during the session by the two examiners, a third corrector market it based on the video recording of the test.

– *Use of language*: As mentioned above, the test consisted of 33 closed questions (multiple-choice) and 10 re-writing questions. These questions are open but required specific responses. This part of the test consisted of 43 questions evaluated according to 5 different aspects.

How was the test correction carried out?

The closed questions (with one possible answer) or semi-open (various possible answers for each item) presented no difficulties for correction as this could be done mechanically.

The open-response questions, however, presented more difficulties. For this reason, specific criteria were agreed upon and applied by the correctors. The parts of the test with open questions were the speaking and writing sections.

With regard to speaking, as indicated above, two examiners were present during the test, one to deliver the test and the other to take notes of student performance. When the session ended the two examiners agreed on the marks given to students. Additionally, a third corrector marked the test based on the video recording of it (all sessions were recorded). All correctors used common criteria at all times. As a consequence, the final mark given was the result of an average of the two marks given.

As this was the first occasion that a test with these characteristics was carried out, three correctors were used in order to guarantee the validity of the final mark.

In the case of the writing exercise, two correctors evaluated the written texts. The criteria applied in this case were also the same for both and, although an average of the two marks was not made, the second correction was necessary in order to guarantee that these criteria were valid and commonly applied to all. Thus, a general consensus in terms of marks was achieved.

Test Marking

In order to understand the results of each of the activities, two situations must be noted:

a. All the students, 1191, performed the test of the four abilities, that is, all abilities except speaking. As a consequence, the weighting of each ability as part of the overall result was 25%.

b. Additionally, a group of students performed the speaking section of the test (243 students of the sub-sample). As mentioned above, these students were taken from the general group of students given the difficulties involved in doing the speaking test. These difficulties made it impossible to take this part of the test by the entire group of students.
For this sub-sample the five abilities were evaluated and a weighting of 20% of the overall result was given to each. (This should be noted as this group

of students is also included in the general group when evaluating the other abilities).

The following table shows the weightings for each of the abilities:

Abilities	Weighting in % without speaking	Weighting in % including speaking
Listening	25	20
Reading	25	20
Writing	25	20
Use of Language	25	20
Speaking	-	20
Total	100	100

As can be seen from the chart above, in both columns the weighting of the abilities is the same. The number of questions included in each ability is adapted to the weighting given (25% or 20%, respectively).

Requirements for a Passing Grade

In order to achieve a passing grade, two requirements must be met:

1. The minimum percentage of the abilities must be at least 60%[9]. This level indicates the demanding nature of the test, precisely because level B2 is also a challenging level. As a result, for this test it not sufficient to receive a 5, as the mark indicating the minimum knowledge required to pass the test is 6.

2. Additionally, those who take the test must achieve a minimum of 20% in each ability. That is, in the case a student does not achieve this result in any of the abilities they will not pass the test even in the case they achieve a 100% in the other abilities

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[9] As mentioned above, in preparing the Basque test the *First Certificate in English* was taken as a model. This test also demands 60% to pass. Other exams also require this mark such as:
-   The *Diploma de Español para extranjeros (Intermediate level)* by the Instituto Cervantes requires a result of 70%in order to receive a passing certificate. This test is divided into three sections: to pass the first part (reading and writing) requires 24.5 out of 35; the second part (grammar and vocabulary) requires 20 out of 24 and the 3ª part (listening and speaking) requires a mark of 31.5 out of 45.
-   A minimum result of 60% is also necessary for the *Certificat de nivell Intermedi de Català* by the Generalitat de Catalunya. This test is divided into five parts: listening, writing, reading, grammar and vocabulary and speaking. Each part is weighted at 20%.

2. GENERAL RESULTS

All results offered from now on are weighted results. We have added the number of students enrolled in each linguistic model with the number of students of the schools selected for this evaluation, giving each school the same weight. Later, we divided the weighting of each school by the number of its students. Finally, we adapted the figures in order for the general number and weighting of the students to match with the sample, that is, with the 1191 students, or in the case of the speaking test, the 243 students who performed the test.

When this report indicates that a difference between figures is relevant, this means that the level of statistical reliability is 95%. In other cases, when only the difference is referred, this is not significant in relative statistical terms.

It must be noted that the data given in the following sections refers to two different samples:

- Firstly, the general sample which applies the four abilities: listening, reading, writing, and use of language.

- The second, the sub-sample, includes the speaking part of the test. In this case, this refers to the results of students who performed the five abilities (that is, speaking and the four indicated above). Another section of this report will specifically analyse the general results and the basic variables (see section 6 of this report).

2.1. GENERAL STUDENT RESULTS (WITHOUT SPEAKING)

A total of 563 students passed the test, that is 47.3%; while 628 failed the test, that is 52.7%.

The following table gives these general results:

RESULTS	Nº	%
Failed	628	52.7
Passed	563	47.3
Total	**1191**	**100.0**

As mentioned in section 1.4[10], it must be taken into account that the level of the test is high; that is, students require a mark of 60% in order to pass. Therefore, other factors (type of correction, order of activities, etc.) have not had a significant effect on the percentage of students who passed since these students did so by a wide margin. On the contrary, when only 50% is necessary to pass a test there is a greater risk of these variable or factors having an effect.

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[10] See: *Requirements for a Passing Grade* on page 26.

2.2.1. GENERAL RESULTS ACCORDING TO LINGUISTIC MODEL

The following chart shows a general distribution of the results according to the different linguistic models: differences were encountered between the different linguistic models with regard to the number of students who passed the test: 27.5% of Model B students passed as opposed to 57.2% of Model D students. This difference is considered significant, with a reliability of 95%.

Models	Pass	
	Nº	%
Model B	109	27.5
Model D	454	57.2
Total	**563**	**47.3**

These same data is shown below as a graph:

Basque test passed: linguistic models.
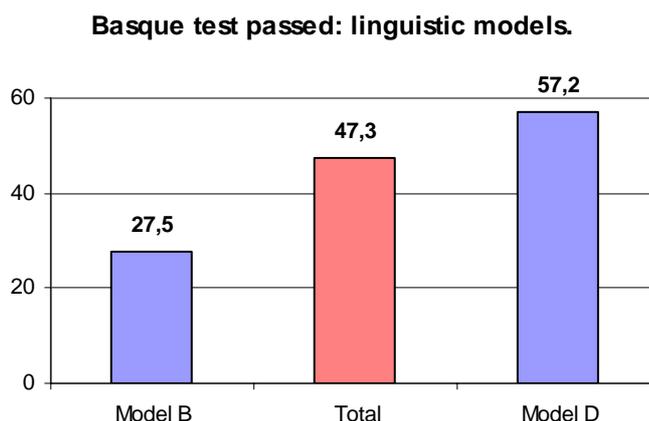
Between the two models there is a difference of 29.7%, as a greater number of students in Model D passed the test. The Model D students exceeded the general average while Model B students did not meet the average. In consequence, this variable is also considered significant.

2.2. GENERAL RESULTS OF THE TEST INCLUDING SPEAKING ABILITY

As indicated above, a sub-sample was created including students who performed the speaking part of the test. This sub-sample consisted of 123 students of Model B and 120 Model D students, for a total of 243 students.

This is shown in the chart below:

SPEAKING	Linguistic model		Total
	Model B	Model D	
Sample	**123**	**120**	**243**

It should be noted that for the general sample, four abilities were evaluated: reading, writing, listening and use of language. As a result, the general achievement does not include the speaking section of the exam.

2.2.1. GENERAL RESULTS INCLUDING SPEAKING ABILITY

Of the 243 students who performed the speaking part of the test, 121 passed, that is, 53.7%, while 122 students, 46.3%, failed.

The chart below presents these data:

RESULTS INCLUDING SPEAKING	Nº	%
Failed	122	46.3
Passed	121	**53.7**
Total	**243**	**100.0**

The following chart indicates:
- The general results, that is, those who performed the test with only four abilities. Pass rate: 47.3%.
- The results for those who performed the test with all five abilities, that is, including speaking: Pass rate 53.7%.

Basque test - General results.
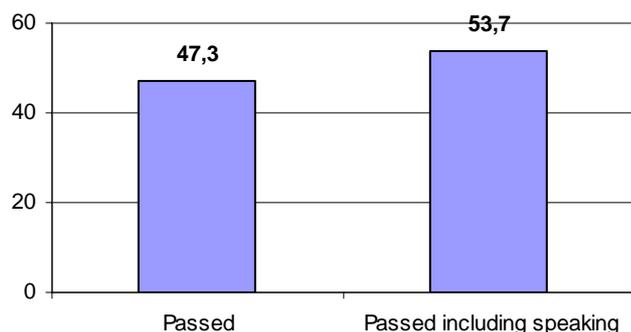
These columns, although they appear together, are not comparable: the first shows the general sample and the second shows the sub-sample.

The following chart illustrates the results of the 243 students of the sub-sample:
- The vertical columns indicate the results of the test with all five abilities, that is, including speaking.
- The horizontal rows indicate the results of these same students without the speaking part of the test, that is, the results without taken the speaking part of the test into account.

Including the speaking part of the test, 121 students passed and 122 failed. Without the speaking part of the test, 114 passed and 129 failed.

		Including the Speaking part of the test		Total
		Failed	**Passed**	
Not including Speaking	**Failed**	119	10	**129**
	Passed	3	111	**114**
Total		**122**	**121**	**243**

In any case, the correlation between these figures is very high (0.883); according to these figures, 3 students failed the speaking part of the test, however, 10 passed thanks to the speaking part of the test.

These 10 students, as well as the other 3, were only able to achieve borderline results in the rest of the abilities. As a consequence, the speaking part of the test only had an effect in these cases. For example, a student who passed the speaking part of the test achieved a mark of 56.47% in the rest of the abilities, but passed the test due to a result of 63.59% in speaking.

More specifically, the close correlation mentioned above reflects what was indicated earlier: the general results would be similar if the speaking part of the test had been taken by to the entire sample.

The tendency can be explained as follows: both results are very similar, without significant differences. Thus, extending the speaking part of the test to the entire sample may have produced similar results. This hypothesis supposes that the results

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of the test would be very similar to those obtained with or without the speaking part of the test.

2.2.2. BASQUE TEST INCLUDING SPEAKING ABILITY AND LINGUISTIC MODELS

Of those who performed the test with the speaking section, 32.6% passed from Model B and 68% in Model D.

MODELS	%	Nº
Model B	32.6	41
Model D	68	80
Total	**53.7**	**121**

These data are also presented as a graph below:

Basque test including speaking and linguistic models.
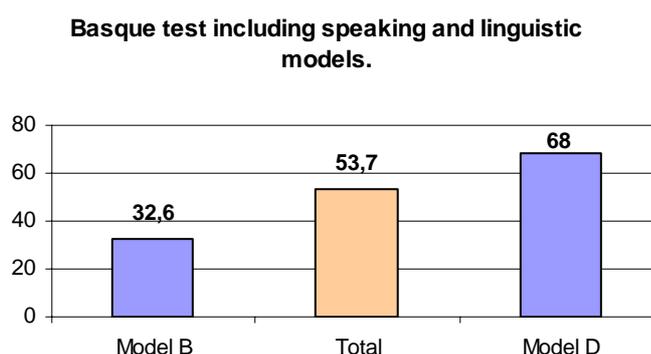
As can be seen, and as in the case with the general results, the difference between Model B and B is significant, specifically 35.4%.

## 2.3. DISTRIBUTION OF RESULTS

This section will analyse the distribution of the results achieved by the students.

The graph below gives the following general information:

- 0.2% of the students obtained a result of 90 to 100%.
- 16.8% obtained a result of 70 to 80%.
- 25.4% obtained a result of 60 to 70%; this result and above it constitute a passing grade (a result of 60% is necessary to pass the test).
- 25.6% obtained a result of 50 to 60%. This is the range for those who would have passed if the passing grade had been fixed at 50%. Below this mark are the students who failed the test.
- 16.5% obtained 40 to 50%.

- 8.0% obtained 30 to 40%.
- 1.9% obtained 20 to 30%.
- 0.6% obtained 10 to 20%.

**Percentage of students by general results.**
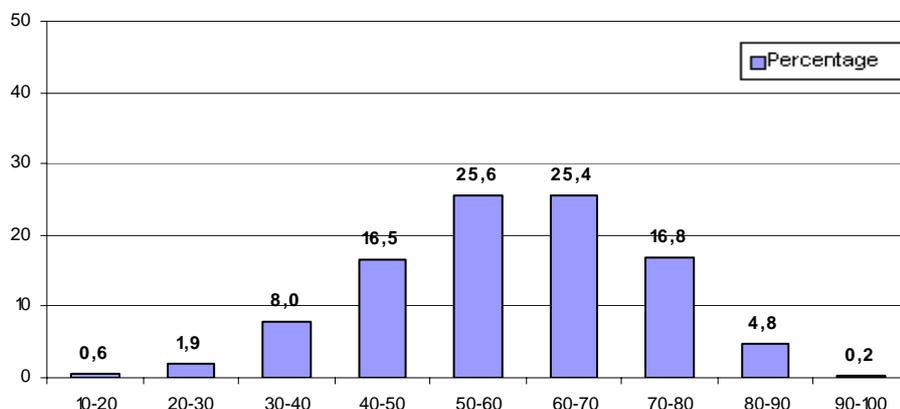
As can be seen, the curve is normalised, that is, it rises in the middle. This indicates that the majority of students (51%) are positioned at the average: 50 to 60% and 60 to 70%.

2.3.1. MODEL D

For Model D, a significant proportion of the students achieved results within the 60-70% range, 29.1%, although a large percentage, 25.6% had results within the 50 to 60% range. The next highest results were in the 70 to 80% range: 21.8%.

**Percentage of students by general results.**
Model D .
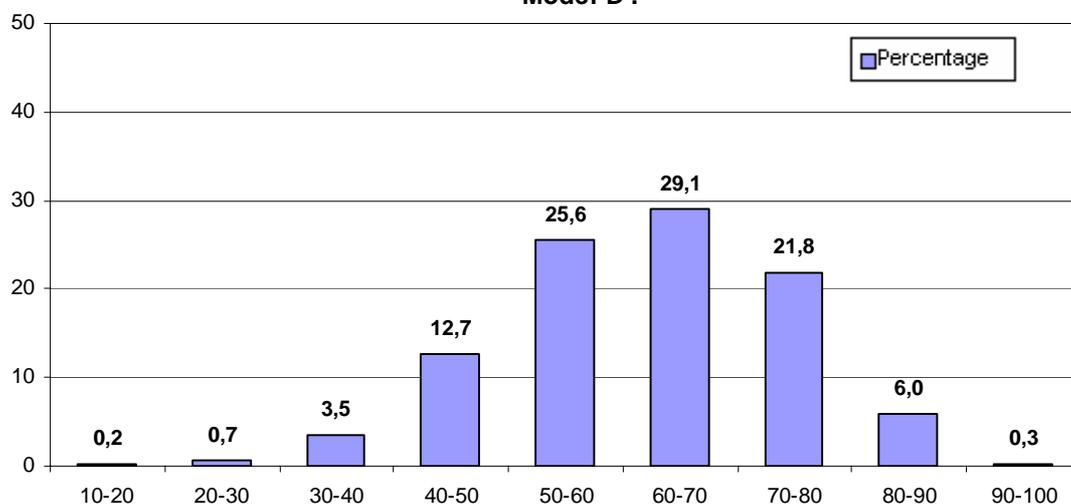
2.3.2. MODEL B

The largest percentage of the students achieved results in the 50 to 60% range: 25.6%; followed by the 40 to 50% range: 24.2%.

The next largest group were those who passed the test, 18.1%, with results in the 60 to 70% range, followed by those with results between 30 and 40%: 16.9%.

**Percentage of students by general results.
Model B.**
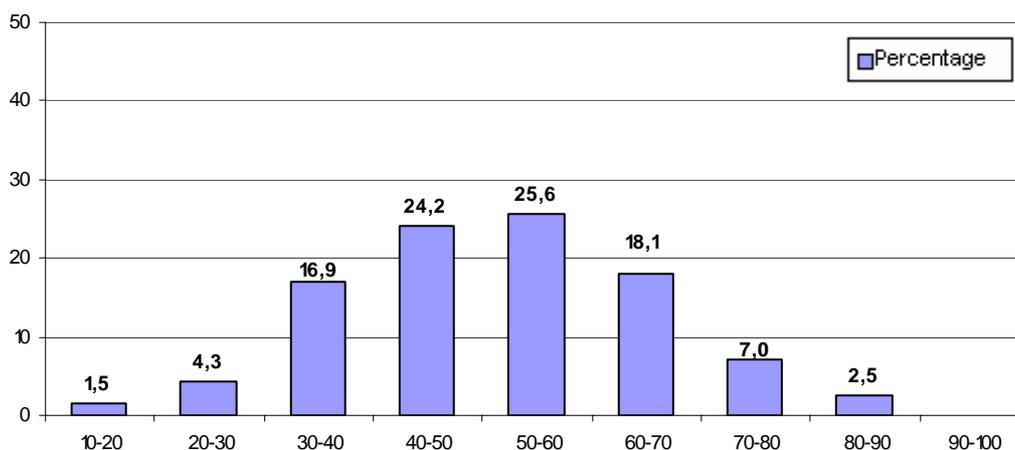
As can be seen in the graph above, the results of Model B students tend towards the left side of the spectrum corresponding to lower results.

2.3.3. DATA INCLUDING SPEAKING

In the case of students who performed the speaking part of the test, the largest group scored in the 60 to 70% range: 25.5%. This is followed by the 50 to 60% range: 24.7%.

The third largest group achieved results in the 80 to 90% range: 17.7%, followed by those scoring between 40 and 50%: 16.0%.

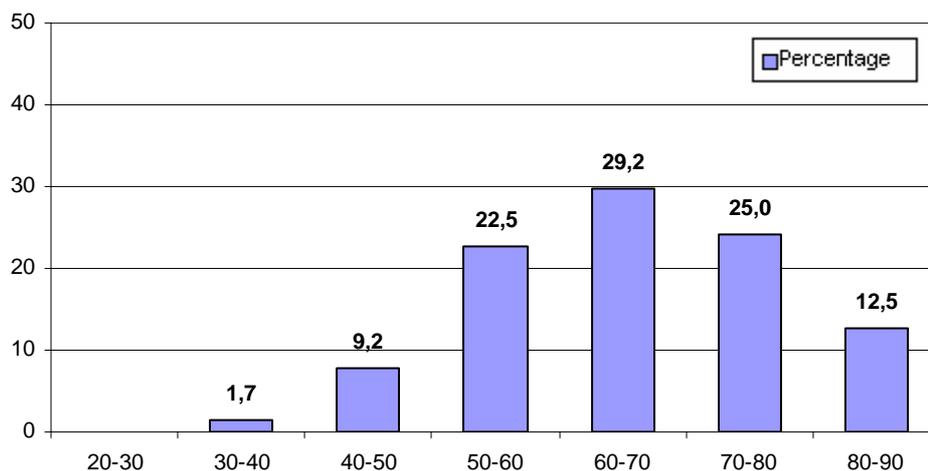**Percentage of students by general results including speaking.**
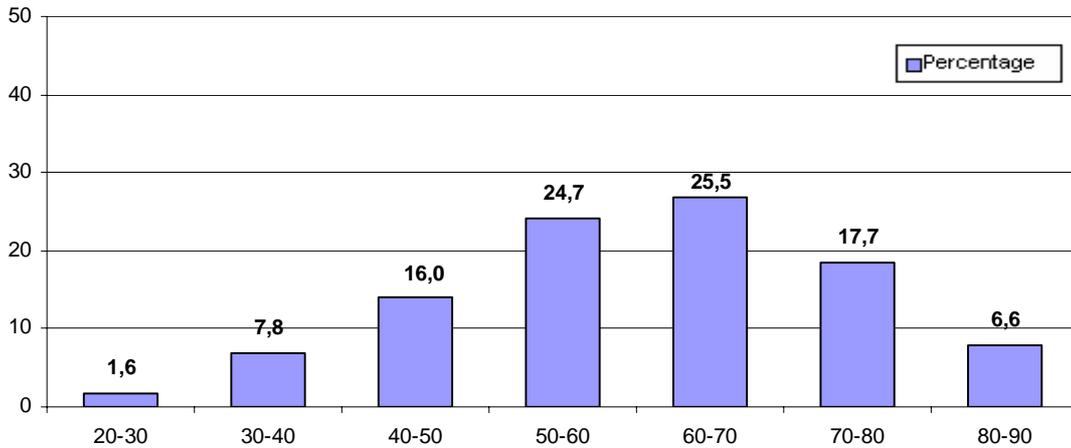
Model D

The largest part of Model D students who performed the speaking part of the test achieved results between 60 and 70%: 29.2%, followed by those scoring between 70 and 80%: 25.0%.

The third largest group scored in the range 50 to 60%, 22.5%, followed by those scoring between 80 and 90%: 12.5%.

Percentage of students by general results including speaking.
**Model D.**

Model B

The largest part of the Model B students who performed the speaking part of the test scored in the range 50 to 60%: 26.8%. These are followed by those achieving results in the 40 to 50% range, 22.8%, and by those scoring between 60 and 70%: 22.0%.

Once again, the columns can be seen to tend towards the left hand side of the spectrum, indicating lower average scores on the whole.

Percentage of students by general results including speaking. Model B.
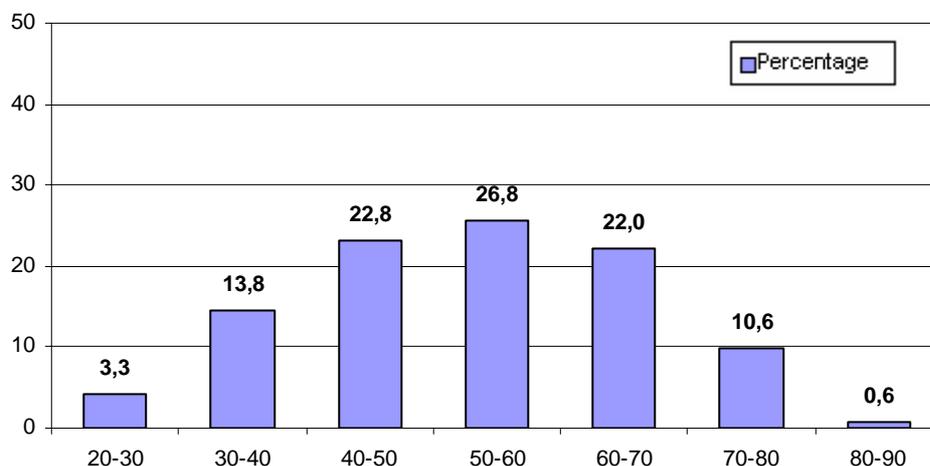
7. STUDENT ATTITUDES TO LANGUAGE LEARNING

Through a series of questions, students were asked about their attitude to language learning. Students were asked their attitude regarding Basque, bilingualism (Basque and Spanish), and other languages, mainly foreign languages.

With regard to student attitudes towards Basque, the following two questions received a very positive response from both Model B, (0.630) and Model D (0.574).

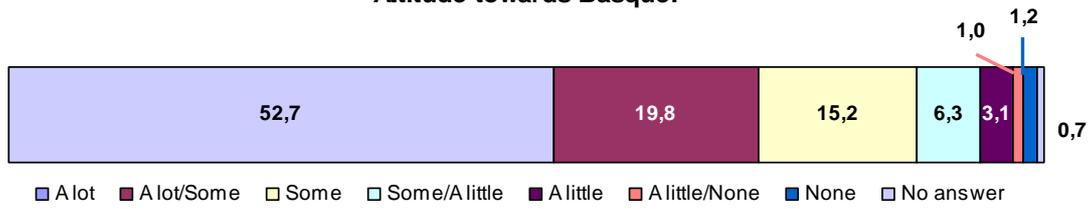The questions were:

- *Do you like Basque in general?*

.... *A lot – Some – A little – None*

- *Do you think it is important to learn Basque?*
.... *A lot – Some – A little – None*

These questions allowed us to evaluate the student's attitude towards Basque. The graph below illustrates the responses received to these questions. Since there are two questions, the category *A lot* indicates that the answers to both questions were very positive while the categories *A lot/Some* and *A little/None* indicate less positive attitude to both questions

.

Attitude towards Basque.

| 52,7 | 19,8 | 15,2 | 6,3 | 3,1 | | 0,7 |

1,0   1,2

☐ A lot   ■ A lot/Some   ☐ Some   ☐ Some/A little   ■ A little   ■ A little/None   ■ None   ☐ No answer

It can generally be said that 4th ESO students have a very positive attitude towards Basque as indicated in the graph above. The students who answered *A lot* to both questions constituted 52.6%; that is, those who enjoy learning Basque and regard it as very important constitute half of the total students. Those who answered *A lot/Some* to each question, regardless of which answer for which question, represent 19.7%. Those responding *Some* to both questions represent 15.2%. Those responding *Some* and *A little,* constitute 6.3%. The total number of positive responses (*A lot/Some*) represent 87.5%.

On the other end of the spectrum, students who responded negatively (*A little* or *None)* regarding Basque and those who give little importance to speaking Basque are in a clear minority (3.1%, 1.2% and 0.7%), 5% of the total.

7.1. STUDENTS ATTITUDES TO BASQUE AND TEST RESULTS

The test was passed by 59.2% of students who expressed a positive attitude to Basque. 37.8% of students whose attitude is *A lot* and 39.9% of students whose answer was *A lot/Some* also passed. Of those students whose attitude is *Some* and *Some/A little*, 32.5% and 18. 2% passed respectively

Those students with a positive attitude towards Basque passed the test in a greater percentage than the rest.

Attitude towards Basque and 'Passed'

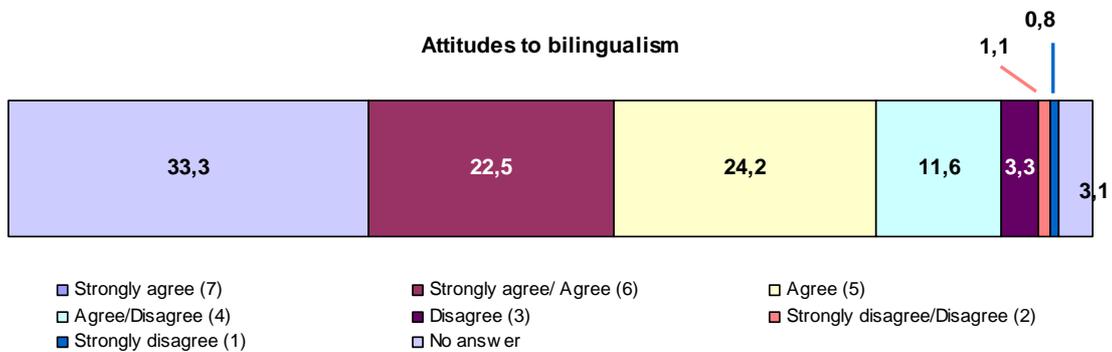| Category	Value
A lot	59,2
A lot/Some	39,9
Some	37,8
Some/A little	18,2
A little	32,5
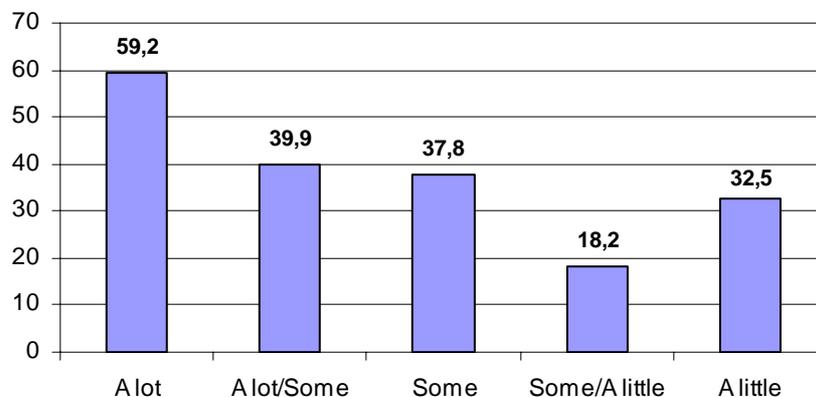
7.2. STUDENT ATTITUDES TO BILINGUALISM (BASQUE AND SPANISH)

We also posed questions regarding student attitudes towards bilingualism (Basque and Spanish). As occurred with the questions regarding Basque, the two responses had a high degree ofcorrelation, as shown below:

- *It is important to learn in both Spanish and Basque……*
  …Strongly agree – Agree – Disagree- Strongly disagree.

- *Both languages can co-exist in the Basque Country……..*
 *…Strongly agree – Agree – Disagree – Strongly disagree.*

The correlation between both questions was high: 0.825 for Model B students and 0.727 for Model D students.

With both of these indicators students' attitudes to bilingualism were analysed.

Attitudes to bilingualism

| 33,3 | 22,5 | 24,2 | 11,6 | 3,3 | | 3,1 |

1,1   0,8

- ☐ Strongly agree (7)
- ☐ Agree/Disagree (4)
- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
- ☐ Strongly agree/ Agree (6)
- ☐ Disagree (3)
- ☐ No answer
- ☐ Agree (5)
- ☐ Strongly disagree/Disagree (2)

It can be generally be said that 4th ESO students show a positive attitude with regards to bilingualism, as shown in the graph. The answers *Strongly agree* and *Agree* constitute 79.9% of responses. That is, almost 80% of students believe it is important to learn in both Basque and Spanish and that both languages can co-exist in the Basque Country. 11.6% of students disagreed with one of these statements while 3.3% disagree with both of them. Students who *Strongly disagree* constituted 1.9%.

Attitude towards bilingualism
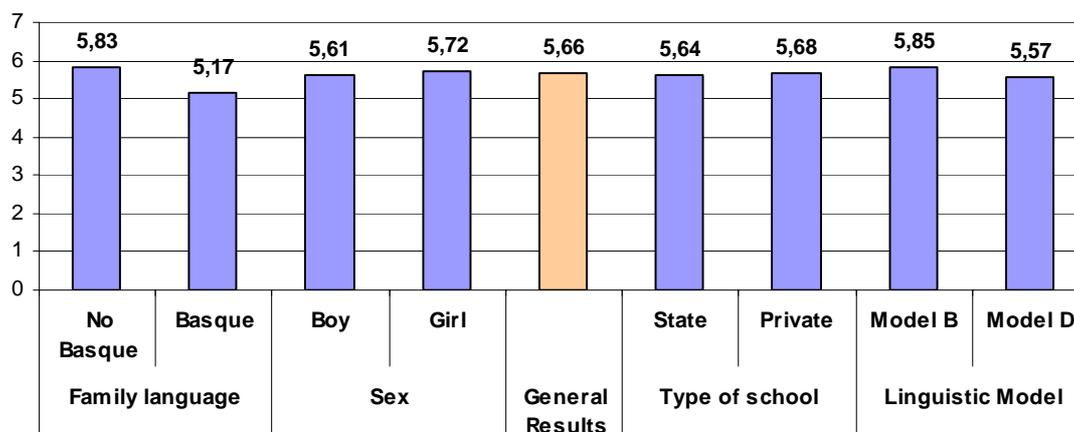
The chart above[11] reflects the attitudes of students to bilingualism including various factors. Students whose principal language is not Basque are more positive towards bilingualism than those who speak Basque at home. The difference shown is considered to be statistically significant.

Students studying with linguistic Model B show a more positive attitude than those studying Model D. This difference is also considered statistically relevant.

With regard to other factors, such as differences in attitudes between girls and boys or public versus private types of schools are not considered significant.
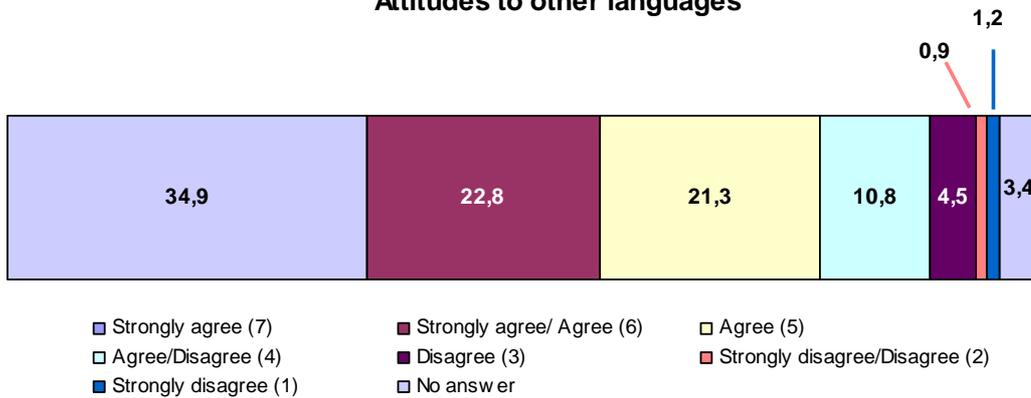
7.3. STUDENT ATTITUDES TO OTHER LANGUAGES

Students' attitude to other languages was evaluated, as well. When speaking about other languages we refer to foreign languages and therefore include neither Basque nor Spanish. We posed various questions, two of which received highly positive responses:

- *I would like to learn more than two languages……..*
  …I strongly agree – I agree – I disagree – I strongly disagree.

- *Apart from Basque and Spanish, it is important to learn another language…*
  …I strongly agree – I agree – I disagree - I strongly disagree.

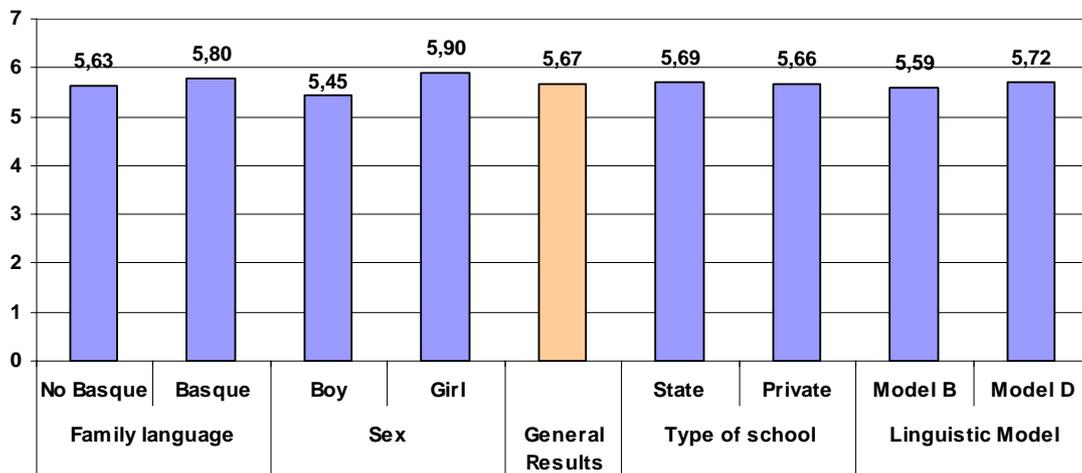[11] To understand the graph it should be noted that the highest option, corresponding to *'Strongly agree'*, is number 7.

Attitudes to other languages

| 34,9 | 22,8 | 21,3 | 10,8 | 4,5 | 0,9 | 1,2 | 3,4 |

- ■ Strongly agree (7)
- ■ Strongly agree/ Agree (6)
- □ Agree (5)
- □ Agree/Disagree (4)
- ■ Disagree (3)
- ■ Strongly disagree/Disagree (2)
- ■ Strongly disagree (1)
- □ No answer

Students of 4th ESO show, as indicated in the chart above, a positive attitude towards other languages. 79% of students *strongly agree* or *agree.* That is, the majority of the students would like to learn more than two languages and consider it important to learn a third language in addition to Basque and Spanish.

Those who *agreed* with one statement and disagreed with another accounted for 10.8% of students. Those in *disagreement* with both questions constituted 4.5% of students while 2.1% were in *total disagreement* with both statements.

Attitude towards other languages

Family language		Sex		General Results	Type of school		Linguistic Model	
No Basque	Basque	Boy	Girl		State	Private	Model B	Model D
5,63	5,80	5,45	5,90	5,67	5,69	5,66	5,59	5,72

The above chart shows student's attitudes to other languages in different areas.

The difference shown between girls and boys is statistically relevant while other differences are not. That is, the difference between students whose language at home is Basque and those who do not use Basque at home is not significant, nor is the existence of models B and D among the students. Finally, the attitude to other languages in the different types of schools (public/private) presents very similar figures.

8. SUMMARY

A) GENERAL RESULTS

- **Student results:** In order to pass the Basque language test, students had to answer 60% of the activities correctly. **The proportion of students who passed the test was 47.3%. Students who failed the test constituted 52.7%.**

- **Results of the test including Speaking:** a sub-sample performed the speaking part of the test. This sub-sample consisted of 243 students who completed all five parts of the test: speaking, writing, reading, listening, and use of language. 53.7% of these students passed the speaking part of the test, while 46.3% failed.

- **32.6% of Model B students who took the speaking section of the test passed while 68% of Model D students did so. Therefore, these are the percentages which would be obtained under normal circumstances.**

- **Without the speaking part of the test**: some data can be summarized about the students who passed the Basque test:
  - Taking into account the language used at home, 72.6% of students who use Basque at home with their mother and/or father pass the B2 level test. However, among students whose family language is not Basque this percentage drops to 38.6%. This is a very significant difference of 34%.

  - With regard to linguistic models, 57% of Model D students passed while only 27.5% of Model B students passed. This difference between linguistic models is statistically significant: 29.7%.

  - Differences with regard to student sex were also observed: 52.9% of girls passed the test while only 41.7% of boys passed. The difference between sexes, 11.2%, is big and is considered significant.

  - With regard to socio-linguistic environment, native Basque-speaking environments appear uniform as students from this environment passed in the same proportion throughout the sample. In the case of native Spanish speakers, 34% of those from Spanish speaking environments passed while in Basque speaking environments this percentage rises to 72%. In intermediate areas the proportion is similar, some 47%.

  - According to the school types, 51.7% of the students in the public system passed while of those in the private/contracted system 43.6% passed. This difference, 8.1%, is considered significant.

  - When observing the level of education within the family background, the higher the level the greater the proportion of passing the Basque test. Thus, 57.8% of students whose parents have a university degree passed while only 38.7% of students whose parents have basic studies

- did so. This percentage drops to 22% for those students whose parents did not complete their basic education.

General Results (not including speaking) 'PASSED' STUDENTS
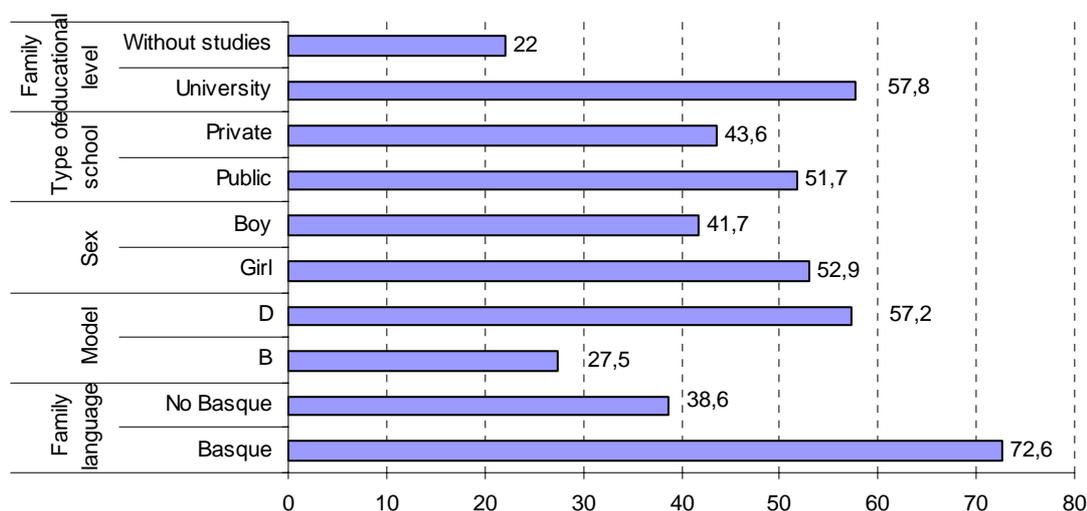
B) MODEL B

- The general proportion of students from linguistic model B who passed without taking the speaking section of the test was 27.5%. **The proportion of Model B students who took the speaking section and passed was 32.6%**.

- According to the factor of language use at home, the results were the following: those students who do not speak Basque at home had results similar to the general percentage: 26.6%. Those students who speak Basque at home however, passed to a greater proportion: 47.5%. As a consequence, this is considered a clear factor in exam success especially when Basque is used in the home.

- The distribution of the results reflects a normal curve: The majority of Model B students had results within the range of 50 to 60%: 25.6%. These were followed by those scoring between 40 and 50%: 24.2%. Third largest grouping was 30 to 40%: 18.1% and finally those who obtained 70 to 80%: 16.9%.

- *Results according to sex:* both girls and boys from Model B achieved poor results and, unusually, there are no significant differences between them. The results are very similar: girls 27.37% and boys 27.67%).

- *Students repeating a year:* 38% of students are repeating a year and the great majority of them (94%) failed the test. Only 6% passed.

- *According to socio-linguistic environment:* The majority of students (88%) are concentrated in municipalities where the proportion of

- Basque-speakers is less than 63%. As a consequence, only 12% of the total number of Model B students live in the predominantly Basque-speaking areas. The figures for Model B are more homogeneous in the three defined socio-linguistic areas and show no significant differences.

- *According to socio-economic and professional status of families (ZHISEI Index)***:** The ZHISEI Index figure, 0.23, indicates that the socio-economic and professional status of the families of Model B students who passed the test is high. For the sample analysed, this figure is higher in Model B than Model D, 0.15. The professional status of families of Model B students who failed the test is inferior to 0, specifically, -0.2.

- *According to the educational level of families:* 37.1% of Model B students whose families have university level education passed the test. In the case of students from families without university level education the success rate for the Basque test was 10.2%.

C) MODEL D

- The general proportion of students from linguistic model D who passed the written part of the test was 57.2%. **The proportion of Model D students who took the speaking section and passed was 68%**. It should be noted that many Basque-speaking students study in this Model.

- The variable of *language spoken at home* is a major factor in differences in the general result: 74.1% of students who speak Basque at home passed the test. This is well above the general average. The percentage of students who passed who do not speak Basque at home was 47.6%, practically equal to the general average. The difference between these two groups is significant, some 26.5%. This variable, as in the case of Model B students is considered very significant.

- The students who achieved the best results had the following profile: they study in Model D and speak Basque at home with their parents, as indicated by a success rate of 74.1%.

- *Distribution of results*, for Model D, the largest number of students achieved results in the 60 to 70% range: 29.1%, although a large proportion were situated in the 50 to 60% range: 25.6%. These were followed by those achieving results between 80 and 90%, some 21.8%. This result distribution conforms to a normal curve, with higher results than those achieved by Model B students.

- *Results according to sex***:** for Model D students the difference between the results of girls and boys is statistically relevant. The success rate for girls was 54.76% while the rate for boys was 48.69%.

- *Students repeating a year***:** only 22.3% passed the test. The majority of this sample, 62% are from Model D and of these 32.3% passed the Basque test. However, a large percentage of students repeating a year for Model D, 67.8%, did not pass the test.
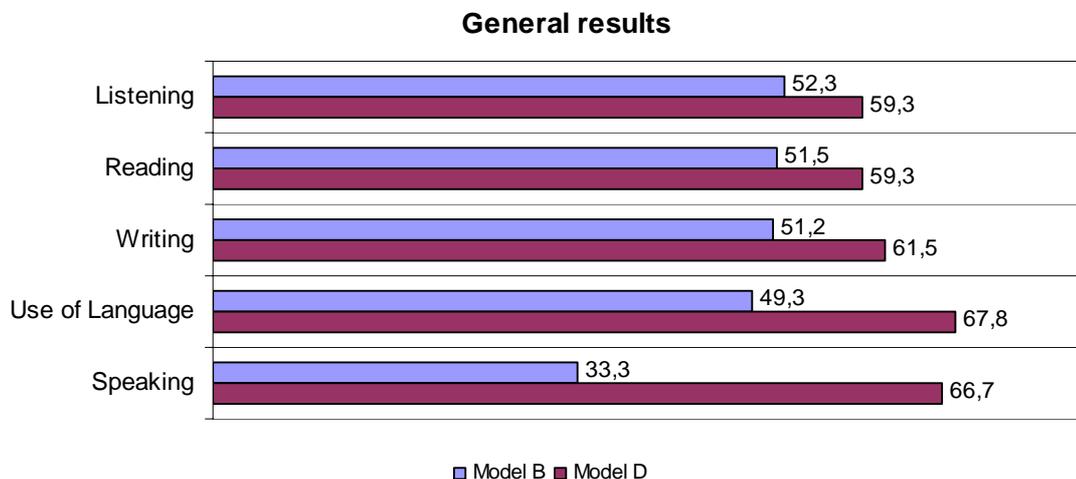
- *According to socio-linguistic environment***:** If we analyse the data for **native Basque-speakers**, the greater the proportion of Basque-speakers in the municipality, the better the results of Model D students. The pass rate for Model D students in municipalities with a Basque-speaking population higher than 63% was 44.4%. Data for Model D students indicates that there is a great difference in results according to their socio-linguistic environment. Thus, where the Basque-speaking population is higher than 50%, almost 64% of Model D students passed the test. The success rate for students living in areas with a Basque-speaking population less than 50% was only 41%, 13 points lower.

- *According to socio-economic and professional status of the families (ZHISEI Index)***:** According to the ZHISEI Index figure, 0.15, the socio-economic and professional status of the families of Model D students who passed the test is high. The figure for Model B students, however, is in fact higher, 0.23. The professional status of families of Model D students who failed the Basque test is inferior to 0.1, although not as low as the figure for Model B students, -0.2.

- *According to the educational level of the families:* 66.3% of Model D students whose families have university level education passed the test. In the case of students from families without university level education the success rate for the Basque test was 39%.

General Results - Models B and D 'Passed'
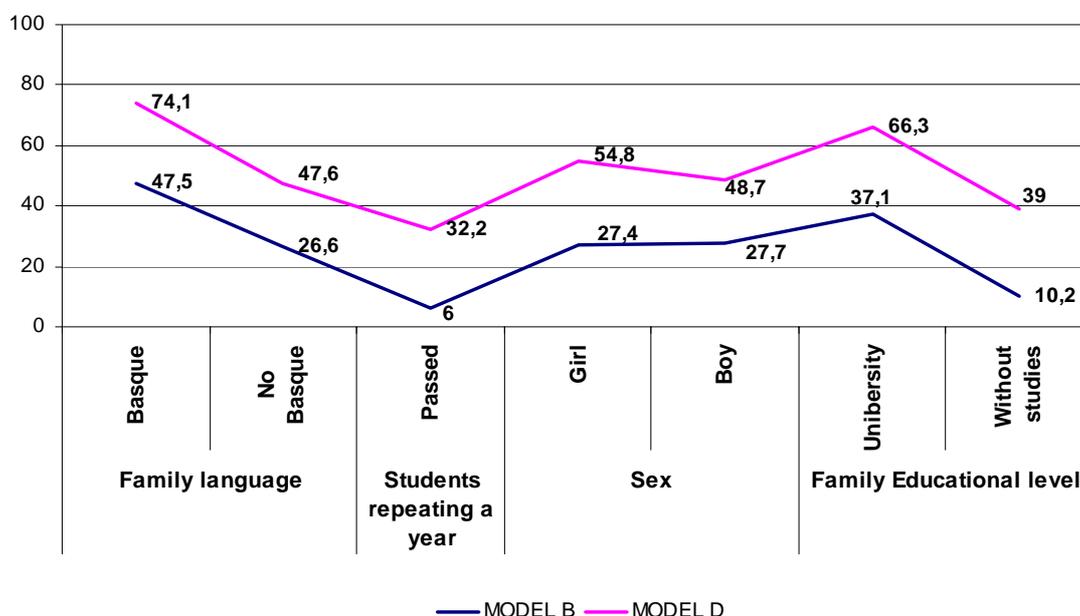
D) OTHER CONCLUSIONS

- **Student attitudes and academic aspirations**

  - With those students who expressed an interest in pursuing university studies, the tests' results were higher than in cases where students had lesser academic ambitions. A large difference was observed between those wishing to go to university and those content merely to finish their Compulsory Secondary Education. The percentage of passes was 59.9% and 2.6% respectively.

  - The students of the sample generally have a very positive attitude with regard to languages. Some 87.5% have a positive attitude to Basque; 79% have a positive attitude regarding bilingualism (Basque and Spanish) and 78% also have a positive attitude to other languages.

- **Abilities**

  - The results obtained in *listening* were 56.97%, that is, practically the same as the general results (58.33%) but slightly lower. The results for *reading* were 56.67%, below the general result. The results for *writing* are very similar to the general result, 58.04%. And finally, the result for *use of language* was 61.64%, higher than the general result.

General results

	Model B	Model D
Listening	52,3	59,3
Reading	51,5	59,3
Writing	51,2	61,5
Use of Language	49,3	67,8
Speaking	33,3	66,7

■ Model B ■ Model D

9. SUGGESTIONS

1. It would be a positive step to award a language certificate for this level at the end of Compulsory Secondary Education, even on a voluntary basis. No doubt, this would help to improve the learning of Basque.
2. The B2 level tests should be spread to schools in order help teachers and students prepare for them.
3. It is very important to establish clear and standardized objectives, unlike the situation at present. The most effective way to achieve this is through an evaluation, even if it is voluntary, implemented at a level similar to B2.
4. This certification, at the end of ESO, may reward the efforts of students and schools and furthermore, provide an added motivation to teachers and students.